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THE FREE SOCIETY.

THE FREE SOCIETY

by
John Middleton Murry



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PREFATORY NOTE

This book was written in the three months, December 1946 to February 1947. I have made no attempt to bring the political references more fully up to date. I do not think that any of my political anticipations will be found seriously at fault; and, in any case, the essential argument of the book is not concerned with, or dependent upon, minutiae.

THELNETHAM,
September 7th, 1947.

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE CONDITION OF PEACE

AS FAR as the intellect is capable of making a judgment, we are living at the intense and culminating point of the collapse of a civilization. Very probably we are also in the throes of the simultaneous creation of a new one. The chances that we shall pass from the one to the other without an enormous catastrophe are not very favourable.

The collapse of a civilization is an impressive phrase. It is also a hackneyed one, and rather vague. It always suggests that there is an analogy between what is happening to-day and the collapse of the Roman Empire: simply because that is immediately conjured up in our minds at the phrase, "the collapse of a civilization." But there is not much substance in the comparison. The Roman Empire was a world-order: or so it appeared to its inhabitants, though there was at least one great independent civilization in existence at the time: the Chinese.

When the Roman Empire collapsed, a vast unitary empire, with a single administration and a common code of law, disintegrated. From what cause has not yet been satisfactorily established. For centuries men were content with the simple explanation that it collapsed under pressure from the barbarian hordes outside. That is true; but it gives no answer to the question: Why was the Roman Empire, which was by far the most advanced political organisation of its time, not able to resist the barbarian pressure? Some complex process of internal exhaustion must have been going on for a long while. On the nature of this process historians are not agreed. Some fasten on the top-heaviness of the omnipresent bureaucracy as the decisive factor; others on the exhaustion of the soil by large-scale farming with slave-labour. What emerges as

certain is that the collapse of a civilization is a mysterious and complicated event.

But the situation to-day is essentially different from that of the late Roman Empire. Certainly, it is not a world-order that is collapsing, if world-order means a world-state, under a common administration and a universal law. That, on the contrary, is what many believe the world to-day is blindly and incoherently struggling towards. What is evidently coming to an end, or to a final crisis, is a kind of world-anarchy, much more like the condition of the Mediterranean world in the two centuries previous to the foundation of the Roman Empire than the condition in the 5th century A.D.

But even here the analogy cannot be pressed very far. The anarchy which has revealed itself in the modern world, from 1914 onwards, is not really very like the obvious anarchy from 200 B.C. onwards to the foundation of the Roman Empire. The modern anarchy (if that is the right word for it) has been an anarchy of which men were unaware. To the average intelligent man of Western Europe or America in the last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th it appeared that the world was advancing rapidly to "the top of happy hours." The sovereign and independent nations appeared to be living on good terms with each other. One could travel freely all over Europe: only in a benighted Russia was that archaic document, a passport, necessary. And even in Russia there were signs that the advance to parliamentary institutions and democracy could not be long delayed. Our own last burst of aggressive imperialism—the Boer War—for which we were justly condemned by the nations of Europe, left us so conscience-stricken that there was a general sigh of relief when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman offered the South African Republics completely equal status within the British Commonwealth. International manners were becoming more refined and civilized, it seemed, every year. "*Qui n'a pas vécu sous l'ancien régime,*" said Talleyrand, "*n'a pas connu la douceur de vivre.*" With quite as much warrant, the Englishman or the Frenchman, who remembers what life was in the ten years immediately before 1914,

might say: "Those who were not alive then, have not known the sweetness of life."

I just experienced it. I came down from the University at the beginning of 1912. I found it a difficult world in which to find a foothold, because it was so stable: there were no cracks to thrust one's toes in. The possibility of a European war simply was not on my mental horizon. Though it is certainly true that my political consciousness was undeveloped, I do not believe that I was at all exceptional, at any rate among the people of my own age, in being completely unaware that the whole European system might blow up at any moment. When, in 1914, it did blow up, it was as though the heavens themselves had suddenly fallen on my innocent and ignorant head.

In August, 1914, when war was finally declared and the excited crowds were cheering in Whitehall, Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, is said to have gone to the window of his room at the Foreign Office. He said sadly: "The lights are going out all over Europe, now. They will not be lighted again." Few men, I think, at that moment, were as prescient or as sombre as he. And even though the war of 1914-18 was more bloody, more desperate, and more long-drawn-out by far than the average Englishman had any idea it would be, I think it is true to say that even at the end of it, most Englishmen believed that the old order would somehow be put together again, in a revised and improved version. The average Frenchman was not so sanguine, because France had received a mortal shock. But France, using M. Aristide Briand as her spokesman, put forward, in the between-war years, the one proposal that might have arrested the deep-seated disease which had so suddenly and catastrophically declared itself in the war of 1914. He proposed a united states of Europe—a genuine European federation.

That was a possible solution in 1924, or it appeared to be a possible solution. If it had been really possible, I have no doubt that it would have been the best possible solution. But too few people in Europe were acutely aware of the dangerous, indeed disastrous, situation that had been revealed by the war of 1914. The apparent peacefulness

and progressiveness of Europe, upon which the 1914 war had broken like an earthquake, was based upon "the balance-of-power." That was, essentially, a precarious thing: a mere equilibrium of forces, the peaceful readjustment of which depended entirely on the willingness of the component states to recognise that the power-resources of each were constantly changing relatively to one another, and to act accordingly. If one nation grew in strength relatively to the others, as Germany had done, it would press its claims to a larger share of the territory of the world; and the other nations would abate their claims accordingly. That is the rationale of the "balance-of-power." In the last resort, it was based on the threat of war; but the threat of war was conceived as something generically different from actual war. Statesmen were called upon to consider the war-potential of the different states of Europe as the index of their just claims to real power. It was a system at once clumsy and delicate: easy to condemn from a perfectionist standpoint, but extraordinarily difficult to replace.

And—let us not forget—under this system Europe had enjoyed peace and prosperity for forty-four years: forty-four years of prodigiously rapid development from 1870 to 1914. During that time the conception of war had changed. Or rather an old conception of war had become obsolete, and had not been replaced by a new one. The old conception of war was that it was simply a means of effecting political changes to correspond to changes in the actual "balance-of-power." If any one of the component states was so unreasonable that it would not recognise that the "balance-of-power" had changed against it, then war could be legitimately applied to it to convince it of its stupidity and of the real facts. It followed that a war would be short and sharp: because no nation would embark upon one unless the real power-situation was overwhelmingly on his side. Hence the famous maxim of Clausewitz: that war is politics, pursued by non-political means. That maxim certainly applied to the Franco-Prussian war, which ushered in the forty-four years of European peace. And the underlying conception received

classical utterance in the remark of the Emperor Franz Josef after Sadowa in 1866: "I have lost a battle: I will pay with a province."

Implicit in the conception was the assumption that the nation victorious in war did not seek to crush its enemy: it only sought to make the enemy "give him best," as schoolboys say—to recognise the true situation, and abate its inordinate political pretensions in accordance with the facts. It sought the minimum possible disturbance of its defeated enemy's domestic order. The vanquished nation was to go on as before, only not so uppishly; and the sooner it became prosperous again, the better, in order that it should pay off the charges of the war it had so foolishly made necessary.

This was, at least, a civilized conception of war; and probably it remained dominant in men's minds right up to the end of the 19th century. But it was really obsolete, for two reasons. The first was that, under the growing pressure of emotional mass-democracy, statesmen were ceasing to be reasonable men. The "balance of power" was actually worked by reasonable men—men, moreover, who were increasingly afraid of war, because of the immense material development that was taking place. For them, war became more and more a plunge into the unknown, because the powers of destruction had become so much greater in, say, 1900 than they had been in 1870. And the second reason, closely connected with the first, was that the nations had become, during the period of immense material development, economically interdependent to an extent of which they themselves were not fully conscious. Men vaguely felt that the new fabric of Europe, which had been built up in the main unconsciously was so closely interknit that the short, sharp war might no longer be possible.

The event proved that it was not possible, any more. When the "balance-of-power" had to be adjusted by actual war, it was impossible to restore the equilibrium again; because war itself, owing to the interdependence of nations, could no longer be isolated, or limited. It necessarily developed into a world-war, not a balance-of-power war; and a world-war, once started, must go on until one of the

adversaries was completely exhausted. That meant that war was no longer a rational instrument for reaching political decisions. It meant that the whole current conception of international politics was obsolete, because the continuance of such international politics depended upon the rational use of war: as, indeed, the *ultima ratio*.

At this crucial point in history—if the continuity of civilization was not to be catastrophically broken—there was only one thing for the nations to do: namely, to renounce war as the court of ultimate appeal for compelling political changes to correspond to the changes in the relative power of the nations. But this was a revolutionary innovation, which could only be made if the nations were fully aware of what they were undertaking. Major political changes would have to be made; for the only alternative was to fix, for ever, the obviously temporary power-situation which had followed a world-war irrationally waged to the point of sheer exhaustion of the defeated side. But how could major political changes be made without war, unless there was established a court of ultimate appeal to take the place of war? That was conceivable only if the nations set up an authority which was verily supra-national, and invested it with sufficient power to coerce any recalcitrant member.

Precisely that simple, but revolutionary thing, the nations were unwilling to do. The great powers would not accept the necessary limitation of their sovereignty, that is, their "right" to go to war. Another world-war, more devastating and exhausting by far, was the consequence. And still they will not accept the necessary limitation of their sovereignty, though war has now become, with the advent of the atom-bomb, more monstrously irrational than ever. Now, indeed, the recalcitrant nations are reduced to one—Russia; for even America has consented to surrender an essential part of her sovereignty to an Atomic Authority.

There can, it seems, be only one end to this fearful situation: a world-authority. The terrifying question is whether it will be established before or after yet a third, and a far more terrible, world-war. I have reluctantly to

confess that, at the present moment, it seems more likely that it will be after than before a third world-war. We can only hope that rationality will somehow, even at the eleventh hour, gain the upper hand. But the danger is very great.

It is very great, because a radically new and incalculable factor has been introduced: the fact that Russia has embraced a new, fanatical and proselytizing religion—Communism—of which the fundamental article of faith is that there cannot be peace on earth until Communism has triumphed universally. According to the Communist mythology, not only is war inevitable in a capitalist world; it is still more inevitable (if that is possible) in a world divided between Capitalism and Communism, because the Capitalist world *must* attempt to destroy the Communist world. Certainly, according to the Communist mythology, the Capitalist world is bound to fail in its attempt to destroy the Communist world. One does not see why. But we are dealing with a fanatical religion, which can triumphantly deny plain facts. It is the plain fact that war is not inevitable between Capitalist countries. U.S.A. and Britain have enjoyed one hundred and thirty years of peace; so have U.S.A. and Canada. It is not, alas, the plain fact that war between Capitalist countries and Communist countries is not inevitable; but the chief reason why war between them is probable is because Russia believes it is inevitable.

That war is inevitable between Capitalist and Communist societies is, I believe, pernicious nonsense. That these two forms of economic and social organisation are in conflict is undeniable; but that this conflict *must* lead to war is an outrageous denial of the capacity of man—as individual, or as social unit—to decide his own actions. Capitalist and Communist societies have merely to resolve not to go to war with one another, and the thing is done. In the last resort it is as simple as that. But, if they do so resolve, they must implement their resolution. It is an empty self-deception for two great nations to resolve not to go to war with each other, if they do not simultaneously resolve to find a way of resolving their disputes and conflicts without recourse to war. They must agree to the establish-

ment of an authority which has the power to decide their disputes. If not, their disputes *must* be decided by war. There really is no third way. The "way of compromise" is not a real alternative. For the way of compromise, which was on the whole successfully followed under the old "balance-of-power," is effective only when there is a court of ultimate appeal for the innumerable disputes in which no direct compromise can be reached. Under the "balance-of-power" that court of ultimate appeal was war. If the ultimate appeal to war is to be excluded, then another court of ultimate appeal must be established, or compromise itself will be impossible.

Is it inherently impossible that Capitalist and Communist societies should agree to establish an authority with the power to decide their conflicts and disputes? If it is, then we must despondently admit that war between them is inevitable, after all. But there can be no such inherent impossibility, if they have really resolved not to go to war with another. That resolve is merely formal and unreal unless it includes the resolve to establish an authority with the power to decide disputes between them, and the power to enforce its decisions.

But only one such authority is practically conceivable: that is, an authority in which the non-Communist and the Communist societies participate. A world-authority from which either was excluded would be conceivable only after another world-war in which one or the other had been completely defeated. But can an authority in which non-Communist and Communist societies participate reach effective decisions? Either there must be such perfect agreement in the members of the world-authority that unanimous decisions are reached on every matter of major importance; or it must be accepted that the decision of the majority is law. To expect unanimity is utterly Utopian. Even when judges are agreed on all fundamental principles, as in the American Supreme Court, or the Judicial Committee of the British House of Lords, unanimous decisions are the exception; majority decisions the rule. How much less are unanimous decisions possible where the conflict on fundamental principles is so great as it is between Com

munists and non-Communists? Yet can we reasonably expect that, in such a situation, the members of the world authority will accept the judgment of the majority as Law?

Here, I think, is the truly appalling difficulty with which the world is faced today. Except in those countries which are directly under the military control or influence of Russia, and in France, Communists are a more or less insignificant minority: so that in any conceivable authority in which other nations than Russia and America alone participated, Russia would be in a minority. Russia will therefore resist the application of the majority principle. Yet can any other be imagined?

We appear to be caught in a vicious circle. To refuse to accept the majority principle because one will be in a minority is to repudiate the majority principle altogether. And that appears to be the position taken by Russia in the world today. From the beginning, the Communists in Russia have repudiated the majority principle. Or rather not quite from the beginning. Actually the very word *Bolshevik* means majority; and it was by a bare majority that Lenin gained control of the Russian Social Democratic party. By a majority, paradoxically, the Russian Social Democrats decided for the seizure of power by a minority of the people, and rejected the fundamental principle of Social Democracy. And this basic repudiation of the majority principle runs through all the history of Communist Russia. This is perhaps the greatest of the many great tragedies of our times.

For when the majority principle is deliberately repudiated there is no way to peace. Internally, in a society in which the majority principle has been repudiated by a minority which has seized power, you have tyranny. It may be effective, it may be efficient, it may achieve all manner of mighty works which could not otherwise be achieved; but in the last resort it remains a tyranny, and the real condition of the country is one of repressed civil war. Therefore, it is impossible for such a country to be other than essentially militaristic, because of the elaborate apparatus of repression that it requires.

The militarist ethos is grimly opposed to the majority

principle. Repression is the watchword in the totalitarian society, as expression is the watchword in the society which respects the majority principle, whereby the minority at any given moment willingly submits to the majority, on the understanding that the minority has full freedom to become the majority. Is it possible for a society which is internally a tyranny to become a willing and fully co-operative member of a supra-national authority in which the majority principle is recognised?

I cannot answer that question with absolute confidence. Miracles may happen. But my reason and my instinct are at one in saying that the difficulties of such willing co-operation in the working of a supra-national authority on the democratic principle are enormous.

Yet is there any other principle upon which such an authority can be imagined as working at all? I cannot conceive one. The so-called principle of unanimity is not a relevant principle at all: for the situations which have to be resolved, without recourse to war, are precisely those in which unanimity does not exist and cannot be elicited. It is the democratic principle, or nothing: and nothing means world-war.

CHAPTER II

THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE

I AM not pretending that, apart from the crucial recalcitrance of Russia, the *democratic principle* is easy to apply to relations between the nations. It certainly cannot be immediately applied on the principle of equality, which is applied in most domestic democracies today. But I think it is true that, if Russia were out of the way, the non-Communist countries would have no insuperable difficulty in creating a representative world-authority which they would obey; nor would there be any difficulty about their allowing Russia a position and status equal to that of the strongest non-Communist power. But, after that, the democratic principle must prevail; or there will be world-war.

In this issue, on which the future of civilization depends, is apparent, in its most acute and urgent form, the "struggle for values" with which this book is concerned. Regarded in the light of history, and of our previous comparison of the world today with the Mediterranean world in the centuries before the Roman Empire, the question is: Will a world-authority be established before or after another world-war? It exceeds the power of my imagination to form a clear picture of the kind of world-authority that would be established after a third world-war, so vast and unpredictable are the powers of destruction that would be unloosed. Yet it must be acknowledged that the evidence of past history and of the present behaviour of nations tells against the successful establishment of a world-authority except it be imposed by main force, and after a world-war. And Destiny seems to have provided an issue—Communism *contra mundum*—on which a world-war may be fought.

But no sane man can contemplate that possibility except with the extreme of horror. One would imagine that the Communists of Russia must contemplate it with the same

intensity of horror as the non-Communists of the outside world. It may not be so ; but it is difficult to believe it is not so. And if it is so, surely there must be the will to establish a world-authority before the fatal plunge into a third world-war.

But then we are driven back—wearily perhaps, but ineluctably,—to the realization that the will required is the will to surrender sovereignty, to accept the decision of the majority in the supreme council of the world-authority as law. And then we must recognise that even the democratic nations have been exceedingly reluctant to admit the democratic principle as between the nations, and perhaps have not wholly admitted it even yet. What is there to be astonished at if totalitarian Russia demurs ?

There is, indeed, nothing to be astonished at. It is only to be expected. But, unfortunately, it is also only to be expected that a world-authority will be established only after another world-war. For the remains of civilization to survive we have to demand the unexpected and the astonishing.

Then the question comes : Is it fair to demand it solely of Russia ? Why should Russia be expected to surrender *her* principle, in order that we may establish ours ? Should there not be a mutual surrender of principles ? It sounds plausible, but it is hard to attach any meaning to it. For the issue is simple. It is how to establish a workable world-authority, whose decision shall take the place of the arbitrament of war. If there is, as there seems to be, no other way of making such an authority work save by the general acceptance of the democratic principle, it is insanity to require that nations which have come slowly and painfully to accept the democratic principle should make a half-surrender of it.

That is true. Nevertheless, perhaps a grain of meaning does lurk within the question, which may be extracted if we ask : What is the Russian principle which Russia is required to surrender ? Is it simply the old and obsolete principle of independent sovereignty—the principle that a nation has the right to go to war in defence of what it deems to be its vital interests ? If other nations are prepared to surrender

this right, why should not Russia? Is there something essentially different in the position of Russia from that of other nations, that she more than they is justified in refusing to surrender this right?

Some would say that there is. They would say that the essential differentia of Russia is that she has organized herself economically, socially, politically, on principles quite different from those of the outer world. These principles—the principles of Communism—are vehemently rejected by the outer world: so vehemently (some would say, and Russia appears to believe) that the outer world will seize whatever opportunity offers of overthrowing the Russian system. Therefore, Russia must retain the right of defending herself by war.

This is quite unconvincing. If the outer world is indeed determined to seize any opportunity to overthrow the Russian system, what more favourable opportunity will ever occur than that which now exists? At this moment the U.S.A. alone is much more powerful than Russia, in accumulated wealth, in productive power, and in a virtual though may be merely a temporary monopoly of the most powerful instrument of destruction—the atomic bomb. Yet the U.S.A. does nothing, and is apparently content to let the moment of supreme opportunity pass by unused.

Well, yes, it may be replied. The outer world is unwilling to go to war in order to destroy the Soviet system in Russia but it would not hesitate to use its majority power on a world-authority for that purpose. Surely, this is plain nonsense. What power would a world-authority have to destroy the Soviet system in Russia, except the power of making war upon it which the outer world has refused to exercise? There is no suggestion that the world-authority should interfere with or control the domestic organisation of its member-states. The only tentative proposal that has been made of this kind is entirely unofficial; namely, that the member-states should pledge themselves to respect certain fundamental liberties of the subject. Perhaps this would eventually prove to be necessary, if the world-authority is to function harmoniously. But at the moment the world would be well content if it could establish a world-

authority on the declared basis of complete non-interference in members' domestic affairs.

On the other hand, it is Russia which consistently and continually interferes with the domestic affairs of other nations, and ensures, by main force wherever it can, that Communists are placed in control of the governments of adjacent nations. Probably, a world-authority would seek to put an end to this interference, and it would probably have to insist that in those countries truly representative governments were elected by secret ballot, before they could be admitted to membership. And it is in the main because of Russian interference in the domestic affairs of neighbour nations that the international situation is so tense and dangerous today.

The Russian excuse is that she does this to forestall aggression, to ensure that Russia is surrounded by "friendly" governments, which could not be drawn into a military alliance against her. If this is right, then it is right that U.S.A. or Britain should intervene, also by force, in those same countries to ensure that governments "friendly" to themselves should be established there. To pretend that it is right for a Communist country to take these reactionary precautions against Capitalist countries, but that it is wrong for Capitalist—or semi-Socialist—countries to take equivalent precautions against the Communist country, is extravagant.

The apparently irreconcilable conflict between Russia and the outer world, which we meet at every turn, resolves always into the same conflict—it is the conflict between the outer world, which rather uncertainly upholds the democratic principle and Russia which definitely repudiates it. If Russia would permit the democratic principle to be applied in the nations adjacent to her—applied under the strictest form of international control—the tension of the world would be immeasurably eased. But Russia refuses, on the ground that the application of the democratic principle would not produce governments "friendly" to her.¹ And beneath this is another ground. If Russia were to admit that the democratic principle is the right and just principle to apply in the formation of a nation's government,

she would be openly acknowledging that her own form of government was wrong, or at least archaic and retrogressive.

But is the democratic principle right? Or is Russia justified in holding that it is retrogressive and wrong, and in maintaining, as she does, that her own totalitarian system represents the true, the forward-looking, form of democracy? ✓

Such a contention cannot possibly be accepted by any reasonable man. It might possibly be accepted that the Russian system is the best of which Russia herself is capable, because at the time of the Russian revolution, the people were not yet capable of working the institutions of representative government; but that the best form of democracy is a form of government under which a small minority of people decides what is best for the great majority and compels them to do it, while it rigorously excludes all possibility of independent criticism—this is stark nonsense. The mere existence of such a form of government in Russia explains why the Russian authorities are so reluctant to admit the validity of the democratic principle: for so long as it is asserted and embodied in actual societies which, with all their defects, manage to exist without putting their citizens in a mental strait-jacket, so long will it be a menace to the stability of the Russian regime. The very idea of political freedom is subversive of the foundations of Soviet Russia, and the example of it a dangerous infection to which the Russian citizen must on no account be exposed.

Economically, the Russian system may be superior to that of capitalist America or semi-Socialist Britain: though even after twenty-seven years it has not produced for the Russian a standard of life as high as that of even the poorest of the Western nations. But even if it had produced for the Russian a higher standard of life than exists in America, still it could not reasonably be said that the Russian social organisation is superior to that of countries in which their economic changes had been made by the method of open discussion and free consent. As Lessing said: "The way we arrive at the truth is more important than the truth itself." The very fact that the establishment and perpetuation of the Russian economic system has demanded the

ruthless suppression of open discussion and the total repudiation of the civilized, and painfully acquired, habit of making economic, social and political changes by free consent makes the Russian economic system itself humanly inferior to those evolved by the democracies.

The Russian contention that they have discovered and established the true form of "democracy" is therefore quite untenable. Interpreted by mere derivation "democracy" may be made to include "the dictatorship of the proletariat"; with equal right it can be made to include the Nazi system of "leadership." But "democracy" in the Western sense is the end-product of a long and patient struggle to exorcise violence from the body politic and to establish the foundations of a free society. It is of the very essence of Western democracy that the government, placed in power by the will of the majority, should be constantly exposed to criticism which is completely free to utter itself; and that the government should resign office so soon as the majority of the people, expressing their judgment through secret ballot, decide that they have had enough. It is of the very essence of Western democracy that an alternative government should be free to organize itself, and that therefore freedom of association and freedom of speech should be established as fundamental and inviolable liberties of the citizen. By these means the peaceful evolution of society is assured.

Not only is the peaceful evolution of society thus assured, but by inviting the utmost freedom of opinion, Western democracy draws to the fullest possible extent on the thought of society as a whole. Theoretically, a more efficient society could be produced if each man were assigned by authority to the socially necessary task which he was best fitted to fulfil. But where is this omniscient authority to be found? No body of fallible men, no matter how disinterested they might be, can be trusted with such authority over their fellows. The power to determine what is socially necessary cannot safely be given to any others than to the whole of society itself, speaking through its elected representatives, which it is free to change at will. For any body of men to claim absolute authority over their

fellows on the ground that they know, while the others do not, what is good for society, and to have the power of suppressing all contrary opinion, is pure presumption. The free democracies of the West have been created by resistance to that presumption.

Western Democracy has made many mistakes ; it will make many more. But it has the virtue of being able to correct its mistakes, without the fatal recourse to internal violence.

CHAPTER III

COMPELLE INTRARE

LET us admit, without reservation, that the necessary pre-requisite of effective democracy is the habit of tolerance widespread through society; and that this habit is not easily acquired. Democratic idealists have too often persuaded themselves that to install the machinery of democracy is all that is required for democracy to be an effective system of government everywhere. This is, alas, simply untrue. And it may be true that the peoples of Russia were so backward in political and moral development, so far from the habit of tolerance or of respect for an *elected* government, that democracy would have been unworkable there. I am not capable of making a judgment. I am prepared to allow that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" exercised by the Communist party may have been a necessary means of preventing disintegration and anarchy in the Russian empire in the years immediately following 1917. What I am not prepared to admit is that this system of government is, in any sense whatever, superior to that of the Western democracies. I maintain that in respect to them it is definitely inferior, and marks not an advance, but a retrogression.

And the danger is that this retrogression may impose a retrogression on the democratic world itself: that Russia may become a centre of infection whence organized intolerance may communicate itself to the West. For Russian Communism is a fanatical and proselytizing religion, with a strange power of appeal to many who have inherited the liberal and tolerant tradition of Western Democracy. That there should be even in England a considerable number of apparently intelligent people who believe, as an article of faith, that Soviet Russia can do no wrong, is largely a mystery to me. I can explain it only by assuming that there is a void in the hearts and minds of such people—

because they have ceased to believe in democracy. Empty of faith in their own form of society, they prostrate themselves before the apparent power and efficiency of the Russian Utopia.

Nothing is more fatal than to lose faith in the free society, the Western democratic society. Faith in democracy has suffered many rude shocks in the last twenty-five years. Beginning with Russia itself—where the Constituent Assembly was forcibly dissolved in 1918—democratic government has been overthrown in country after country in Europe; and the half-hearted have rushed to the conclusion that democracy does not and cannot work. The counter-democratic revolutions of Europe, of which the Russian was the first, prove not that democracy cannot work, but that it cannot work where there is no belief in tolerance and no deep-rooted habit of practising it.

The future of civilisation, I am convinced, depends upon the spread of the belief in, and the habit of tolerance: first of all, in Europe. The area of tolerance in Europe has shrunk seriously since 1914; and at this moment it is doubtful whether France itself will remain faithful. I believe it will. I believe, too, that the area of tolerance has shrunk to its minimum, and that it will slowly begin to expand again. But this struggle for values is one in which every man and woman who can appreciate the magnitude of the issues involved is called upon to play his or her part. For this is the crucial "mental fight" of which Blake spoke:

I will not cease from mental fight

Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand . . .

It is the fight for tolerance and spiritual liberty against the pretensions of infallible authority, using physical violence to enforce its commands.

It would be quite foolish to ignore the reality of this profound conflict. What we need to realize is that the mental fight which is required of us on behalf of the fundamental principles of Western democracy includes and involves a mental fight to prevent this conflict from being fought by material weapons. If the issue between

Communism and Democracy has to be decided by another world-war, it is doubtful whether the free society can survive at all. Those who dream of Russia being knocked out by the military power of U.S.A. do not realize that, although the democracies would almost certainly prevail in such a contest, democracy itself would probably suffer a mortal blow. The degradation of the ethos of the free societies which would occur if they become involved in a third world-war, with modern weapons of destruction, might be irreparable. The moral ravages of the second world-war have been appalling enough.

I believe therefore that it is necessary to set fearlessly before our minds the overriding necessity of avoiding a third world-war at *almost* any cost. We must regard it as *almost* axiomatic that the free society cannot be successfully defended by a post-atomic war. The means employed will *almost* certainly destroy the end.

Unfortunately, the same misgiving does not exist in *the minds of the rulers of the totalitarian society*. Indeed, nothing appears more likely to promote the spread of totalitarianism through the world than a third world-war. Nevertheless, we may believe that the Russian leaders are sincere when they profess that they dread another world-war: for though its outcome would probably be a totalitarian world-government, it would probably not be a Communist one.

So we have this strange position: that Russia, while dreading a third world-war, repudiates the only principle on which a world-authority, which provides the only alternative to war as the final court of appeal in major political disputes, can be based. She repudiates this principle for two main reasons, (1) because she has repudiated it in her internal affairs, (2) because its application, in international affairs, would lead to a weakening of her influence on the nations adjacent to her. On maintaining this influence she insists, because, she says, it is essential to her "security." Thus the practical problem to solve is how to assure Russia, or to enable Russia to assure herself, that she is secure.

When we reflect that it is an essential part of the educa-

tion of the Russian citizen that he is indoctrinated with the idea that Russia is surrounded by malignant capitalist enemies, the difficulty of solving the problem emerges clearly. No such fear is operative in the outer world: Canada is not mortally afraid that U.S.A. will attack her; France is not terrified of Britain; Australia may be resentful, but she is not panic-stricken, because all the bases in the Pacific are in American hands. The relations between the nations of the outer world may not be entirely amicable, but they are not vitiated by the fear of mutual attack. At bottom, Russian fear of attack appears to be the root-cause of the perilous situation of the world.

If the tempo of world-events had not become so prodigious, by reason of the immense increases in the physical power at the disposal of mankind, it might be left for events to convince Russia that she will not be attacked. To the outer world itself the idea that she will be seems fantastic—except in one connection. If Russia continues to refuse the necessary conditions of an effective world-authority, which is the only alternative to war as the final court of political appeal, then, under the continual threat of the sudden use of the appalling modern weapons of mass-destruction, life for the nations of the outer world may become so precarious as to be utterly intolerable, and they may deliberately decide to “compel Russia to come in.” Indeed, it might be reasonably argued that an ultimatum from the outer world to Russia requiring her to submit in common with the rest of the world to inspection of her atomic activities is, even now, the sanest and humanest policy that could be followed in the interests of world-peace.

The mere fact that such a policy towards Russia can be seriously entertained as the most likely to secure world-peace shows plainly how futile is the thought that, under modern conditions, it is possible to wait for Russia to be convinced by events that the outer world will not attack her. There can be no such period of waiting: no such interregnum of indifference during which the desire of the outer world to live at peace with Russia can be made so manifest as to convince her that she is mistaken in believing that she is surrounded by enemies eagerly waiting the

opportunity to attack her. If Russia is not already convinced of this by the fact that the outer world has not taken the present overwhelmingly favourable opportunity to attack her, then it is a reasonable deduction that facts have no influence upon the controlling minds of Russia. If, in spite of the facts, Russia's fears still persist, and prevent her from making the necessary contribution to the establishment of an effective world-authority—if she maintains her secrecy and her refusal of inspection at a time when it is open knowledge that any nation which maintains secrecy can be accumulating the power to devastate, in a few moments, the centres of the world's economic life—then it is almost certain that the outer world will “gang up” against Russia to put an end to a menace so intolerable to the peaceful evolution of the world.

There is, indeed, a theoretically conceivable alternative ; that the outer world should disarm itself completely in order to remove the Russian fears. As an individual person, I am prepared even for this, so appalling to me is the thought of a post-atomic world-war and its consequences ; but I feel that in saying so I have passed the bounds of sanity. By taking such a position I cease to be a reasonable man, and enter a realm which might, indifferently, be called the realm of complete faith or complete despair. But, whatever I might be prepared to do as an individual person, I know that the free societies will not do it. They will feel that it is utterly wrong, a shameful betrayal of the finest principle and most precious element of their own not wholly exemplary life, that the nations which have established the practice of internal tolerance and government by consent should throw down all their defences against a nation which definitely repudiates this principle and rejects this element.

Pacifist at heart though I am, I am not prepared to contend against such a conviction. I do not believe that it is wrong ; on the contrary, I believe that it is right. I believe, too, that if the outer world deliberately preferred post-atomic war to surrendering the principle and practice of tolerance to a great Power which has no respect for either, it would be acting in accordance with the highest conceivable morality. I believe that its action, in such a case, would be

every whit as Christian as mine if I were to refuse to support the action. I might, at the most, claim that I ranged myself with Him who declared: "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight"; but if I believed that, I should say that, and only that. I should regard it as a mortal sin, an unpardonable offence against intellectual and moral integrity, to maintain that my action had any relevance to the kingdom of this world, or that it would conduce to world-peace. I should be in no doubt whatever that I was following in the steps of Him who said: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword."

So much I have said for my own clarity of mind. If I, for my own part, chose non-resistance to evil, I should sincerely hope that the outer world—the nation-states as I know them, and their peoples in the condition of moral development in which I believe them to be—would defend its principle and practice of international tolerance even at the cost of certain death and world-destruction. That principle and practice is, I am convinced, the very highest that it knows, and in going to its death for that, it would be heroic indeed. A third world-war will be a terrible thing; but not so terrible as the cowardly submission to intolerance in order to avoid it. If this great globe and all that it inherit were to become débris and ashes rather than surrender tolerance, the human race could at least hold up its head in eternity. And I should hold up mine.

The outer world will not disarm in order that Russia may not be afraid. It is Russia's duty to cease to fear. And if she will not cease to fear, but will insist on having security in a world in which her security can only be maintained by a secrecy which makes the whole world outside her insecure; if she will go on scheming to make herself secure by undermining the practice of tolerance in the free societies of the outer world, and thus making them insecure within as well as without—then, sooner or later, the outer world will be compelled to compel her to come in. It would be a just retribution: for Russia herself has not hesitated to compel independent nations to come into her orbit of power, and be swallowed up in her system of massive intolerance. In compelling Russia to enter the world of tolerance, the outer

world would be doing her no wrong, but conferring upon her the greatest benefit that one group of nations could bestow upon another.

If it be said that this would be world-capitalism brutally enforcing its will on world-communism, I reply that these are utterly unreal abstractions. The important ideological issue in the world to-day is not between Capitalism and Communism, but between tolerance and intolerance, between the free and the unfree society. Capitalism may have many faults, but it is far from being the sheer monstrosity which Communists, and many Socialists who should know better, habitually represent it to be. Not one in a thousand of the "down-trodden proletariat" of Great Britain would, if he could, change places with his counterpart in the liberated proletariat of Soviet Russia. If I am told that this is because Britain is Socialist now, I would reply, first, that this, if true, makes nonsense of the theory that world-Capitalism would be brutally enforcing its will on world-Communism; and, second, that not one in ten thousand of the "down-trodden proletariat" of the U.S.A. would, if he could, change places with his counterpart in Russia. It is not Capitalism that unites the outer world against Russia, but the political and moral achievements which were concomitant with the rise of Capitalism—freedom and tolerance. The common possession of, the common struggle for, these achievements is what unites U.S.A. and Britain and brings them together in spite of the fact that the Capitalism of the one and the Socialism of the other tend to drive them apart. It is the common theory and practice of tolerance, of government by consent, of domestic change by peaceful means, which makes unthinkable war between them and makes possible their genuine co-operation in an organization to maintain world-peace. On the other hand, it is Russia's repudiation of the theory and practice of tolerance, of government by consent, of domestic change by peaceful means which makes war between her and the outer world not only thinkable but probable, and makes her refuse to co-operate in an organization to maintain world-peace.

CHAPTER IV

THE ONE JUST WAR

At an early stage in the previous argument I said that the belief that war is inevitable between Capitalist and Communist nations is pernicious nonsense.

It is undeniable (I said) that these two forms of economic and social organisation are in conflict; but to maintain that this conflict *must* lead to war is an outrageous denial of the capacity of man, whether as individual or unit of the nation-state, to decide his own actions. Capitalist and Communist societies have only to resolve not to go to war with one another, and the thing is done. In the last resort, it is as simple as that. But, if they do so resolve, they must implement their resolution. It is an empty self-deception for two great nations to resolve not to go to war with one another, if they do not simultaneously resolve to find a way of resolving their disputes and conflicts without recourse to war. They must agree to the establishment of an authority which has the power to decide their disputes. If not, their disputes *must* be decided by war. There really is no third way.

On that basis the argument of the last chapter was conducted, and it led to the unwelcome and depressing conclusion that, since there was no principle on which a world-authority could operate except the majority principle, so long as Russia rejected this principle, no authority whose decision could replace war as the *ultima ratio* in major conflicts between Great Powers could be established.

But the argument that, if the great powers—Communist and non-Communist—are really resolved not to go to war with each other, a world-authority must be established whose decision must take the place of war as the *ultima ratio*, though it is logically convincing, is not quite flawless

and compelling. It is conceivable that the Communist and non-Communist great powers might resolve not to go to war with one another, and might maintain their resolve, although they refused to co-operate in establishing a world-authority.

This is, undoubtedly, a *possibility*. Therefore it must be investigated and examined; the more earnestly because at the present moment it appears at first sight to offer the chief possibility of avoiding a calamitous third world-war.

Such a condition of affairs is extremely difficult to think about. It is essentially fluid, or even nebulous. In the first place, the resolution of the great powers not to go to war with one another can be demonstrated to be real only by the event itself. If it proves to be the fact at the end of twenty-five, or fifty years, that the Communist bloc and the outer world have not made war on each other, then we may regard their present professions of unwillingness to do so as having been seriously meant. But until that time, it would be foolhardy to place any faith at all in their professions. The Kellogg Pact was more than a profession; it was a solemn renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. Nevertheless, it was worthless, and from the moment of its being signed, none of the signatory powers showed any sign of having faith in it. Probably the only reason why a similar pact is not proposed and signed to-day is that it would convince nobody.

In the second place, though a great power may be convinced of its own determination not to go to war, there is no way of its proving its sincerity even to itself except by unilateral disarmament; and certainly no other way of proving it to another great power. The extreme reluctance to go to war is generically different from the resolution not to go to war at all. We may credit both Russia and the outer world with extreme reluctance to go to war; but only if they deliberately and visibly destroyed their own capacity to go to war could a sane man put any faith in the sincerity of their resolution not to go to war at all.

In the third place, since universal and complete disarmament is the only convincing evidence that great powers are sincerely resolved not to go to war, and that is admittedly

a chimerical proposal, we are left with the bare possibility that the great powers may not in fact go to war. But that is, in no sense at all, an alternative to the high probability of war which now exists. It is precisely the same condition, seen from a slightly different angle. No objective observer would take upon himself to say that war is absolutely certain between the Russian bloc and the outer world. „The most pessimistic among us would admit that there is a chance that it may not happen. But it is a pure *chance*. It is a possibility which cannot be striven after by any rational means, and in which no rational man can have faith. Therefore its existence cannot in any degree diminish the general condition of anxiety and fear which prevails among the nations.

In the fourth place, even unilateral disarmament, though it would prove the sincerity of the disarmed nation, and the reality of its resolve not to go to war, would in no way prevent it from being involved in war. To become the passive victim of post-atomic war, to be blotted out by one belligerent in order that it might not become the vantage-ground for another, is what a disarmed nation—in Western Europe, anyhow—would have to expect.

In the fifth place, multilateral partial disarmament, which seems to offer a third way between unilateral disarmament and universal complete disarmament, is only practicable if there is established an international system of inspection and control. No great power can possibly afford to put faith in another's mere assurance that it will limit its armaments to a prescribed level. But inspection and control mean the establishment of a world-authority, if only to ensure that the inspection and control are effective, and to take action if the prescribed limitations are ignored. And, even if the limitations were adhered to, such multilateral disarmament would not greatly diminish the possibility of war. It would be essentially a general convention for reducing the economic burden of preparation for war. It would preserve and stabilize the existing power-relation, since no great power could or would be expected to reduce its forces below the minimum necessary for a quick total mobilization.

Nevertheless, such a general disarmament convention would be an improvement on the existing situation : since, in order that it should be valid at all, a nucleus of world-authority would have to be established to inspect the national armaments. Control is a different matter. The word itself has a rather different meaning in English from that which it has in French, which is still the chief language of diplomacy. "Control," in English, implies coercive power to correct the irregularities which inspection may reveal ; "contrôle," in French, generally means no more than the right of inspection and report alone. An authority which had the right of punishing breaches of regulation which were revealed by its inspection would be a world-authority indeed. But it has to be remembered that the punishment could be imposed only by the threat of war.

But we need to examine the conception of a general disarmament convention more closely. From the foregoing analysis we may define it as a general agreement to maintain the existing power-relation, *if that can be fixed by agreement*, by prescribing the level of armaments permitted to each power, and simultaneously establishing an authority with the right of inspection. If inspection reveals that the regulations are being broken by any power, the powers which are party to the agreement have to decide whether to ignore the breach, or to coerce the transgressor. If the breach is ignored, or verbally condemned and in fact condoned, the disarmament agreement breaks down completely. If the transgressor is coerced, it can only be by the threat of war, and war itself, if the threat of war is without effect.

This is, in reality, an attempt at a new version of the balance of power. The chief novelty consists in the effort to make the balance of power more explicit, by fixing the existing power-relation as the norm, from which departure is forbidden. But is it practically conceivable that any agreement can be reached on this fundamental matter ? I gravely doubt it. What is the existing power-relation as between U.S.A., Russia and Great Britain ? How can it be formulated ? And must it not be completely shattered the moment Russia has attained a technical capacity of manufacturing atomic bombs equivalent to that of U.S.A. ? In

these days of incessant invention of weapons of mass-destruction it appears that the establishment of an authority with full powers to inspect armaments is a necessary *preliminary* to a general disarmament convention, if it is not to be an elaborate mummery.

We will recapitulate the argument. In bare theory, our contention that, if the great powers are determined not to go to war, they *must* establish an authority whose decision shall take the place of war as the *ultima ratio*, is not absolutely compulsive. There is the theoretical possibility that they might both determine not to go to war and refuse to establish such an authority. But this determination would be real only in the following two conditions. For single nations, if they disarmed unilaterally, which would not save them from destruction. For all nations, if they agreed to universal and complete disarmament, which is admittedly chimerical and would in any case require a world-authority to see that it was carried out.

The proposal of multilateral partial disarmament does not really fall within the scope of this possibility at all. It is no evidence of a determination not to go to war; but, if practicable, it might diminish the danger of war. Its practicability is extremely doubtful. Essentially, multilateral disarmament is a revival of the balance of power in a more explicit form; and examination reveals that it requires the establishment of an inspecting authority to determine the existing power-relation *before* any agreement can be reached. If agreement could be reached, it requires an authority to punish any breach of agreement. It is, therefore, either an elaborate self-deception, or a roundabout way of establishing a world-authority, to preserve the existing balance of power. Considered as an alternative to such a world-authority it is meaningless.

Universal complete disarmament requires a world-authority; so does multilateral disarmament. Unilateral disarmament remains as the only means by which a great power can make manifest its resolve not to go to war. That does not require a world-authority, any more than the behaviour of perfect Christians requires the law to enforce it. But it is as unlikely as that behaviour.

All that remains, therefore, is the bare possibility that in fact the great powers will not go to war. The existence of that bare possibility does, and can do, nothing whatever to give the world security. For, in the grossly improbable event of a great power being firmly resolved never to go to war, it will take very good care that its intention shall not be known, lest the compromises which are at present the only hope of a peaceful solution of international conflicts should always be made at its expense.

The way of compromise, as we have shown in the previous chapter, is only practicable when there is a universal readiness to go to war in the last resort. When war remains, and is openly acknowledged to be, the *ultima ratio*, compromise is feasible. It is also feasible when a world-authority is established. Powers may well prefer to settle their disputes out of court, so to speak, rather than run the risk of a wholly unfavourable decision. Then the *ultima ratio* appears to be the decision of the world-authority. But, in fact, it is still war—the threat of war waged by those who support the world-authority against those who refuse to accept its decision. We are back to where we started.

Obviously, a succession of compromises based on the *ultima ratio* of war, does offer a conceivable way of in fact avoiding war. Balance-of-power politics—for that is what it is—could, just conceivably, avoid actual war. But again it would do nothing whatever to free mankind from the menace of universal destruction; and almost certainly it would precipitate the calamity, because the uncertainty would be too much for men to bear. They would be acting rationally in seeking to put an end to it, even by the terrible means of post-atomic world-war. For human life would cease to be bearable under such conditions. Men could plan no rational existence with any hope of achieving it; the very foundations of rational living would be destroyed.

It seems therefore clear that a world-war for the purpose of abolishing war would be definitely preferable, on every ground, morally, rationally, religiously, to an attempt to avoid war by way of compromise based on the threat of war. That has now ceased to be a rational way of seeking

peace between the nations. It belongs to an epoch that is past for ever. The rational way to abolish war is to establish a world-authority whose decision shall replace the arbitrament of war; if that is prevented by the contumacy of any single nation, or combination of nations, the only rational way to abolish war is to prepare to wage it against the offending nation. For world-war, whether it is won by the Communist or the non-Communist powers, will certainly produce a world-authority. Until there is a world-authority the lives of men will be more certainly and more insidiously destroyed than they will be by a third world-war. A third world-war offers mankind the certainty of final release from the doom of utter disintegration. The effort to avoid a third world-war by any other means than the establishment of a world-authority will only accelerate that disintegration.

That is a hard conclusion. Yet I cannot see how it can be avoided. There is no reality in the possibility of avoiding war by other means than the establishment of a world-authority: for those "other means" either themselves involve the establishment of a world-authority, or they reduce to a manifest Utopianism, such as universal and complete disarmament, or they assume the possibility of "the way of compromise" which to be effective must be based on the threat of war. In other words, the choice is really between a world-authority, or a condition which is itself worse than the war which it pretends, quite falsely, to avoid.

But, as we have indicated in passing, the establishment of a world-authority would not—in its early stages, anyhow—absolutely prevent war. It would do so if the majority-principle were really accepted. But in the event of any nation being recalcitrant, all that remains, if the world-authority is not to be nugatory, is to coerce the recalcitrant nation. That can be done only by the threat of war, or war itself. War waged for this purpose, though it might not be much less materially destructive than war waged for any other purpose, would certainly be far less destructive morally, because it would be waged for a clearly defined moral end. It would be freed at once from the

irrational and calamitous demand for "unconditional surrender," because the conditions of surrender would be clearly defined, and entirely honourable. All the recalcitrant nation would be required to do would be to submit itself to the law, to accept the majority principle.

The difference between such a war and the second world-war would be morally vast. For the evil demand for "unconditional surrender" derived directly from the complete absence of any common principle or purpose to unite the enemies of Germany and Japan. America and Britain could have proclaimed conditions of surrender to Germany—the establishment of a democratic government; so could Russia—the establishment of a communist government: but conditions of surrender which could satisfy all the members of this purely adventitious military alliance were quite impossible to discover, because their principles were so radically divergent. In order that conditions of surrender could be offered to Germany, the *ad hoc* military alliance needed to become a genuine association based on adherence to some common principle. "Unconditional surrender" was a rational demand in the conditions in which it was first promulgated in modern times—namely, by the North to the South in the American Civil War: precisely because it was the demand made by the United States that the Southern states should re-enter the Federation, from which they had broken away. "Unconditional surrender" in that political context was, in reality, surrender on known and explicit terms which were too familiar, and, indeed, too reasonable, to need to be formulated. In the political context of 1941-1945 "unconditional surrender" was a purely irrational demand, dictated not, as it was made to appear, by the heinousness of Germany's offences, but by the absolute impossibility of the allies agreeing on any conditions on which Germany could be allowed to exist.

The war fought by a world-authority against a nation which defied its decision would be governed by explicit and completely reasonable conditions of surrender. So also would a war fought to compel a recalcitrant nation to become a member of a world-authority which had not been, and could not be, formally constituted as a world-authority

because of the recalcitrance of that nation. Those two wars are essentially of the same kind: they would belong to the order of judicial acts, and must be pronounced rational wars.

Admittedly, to pronounce any post-atomic world-war a rational war is something of a paradox. But, however much the phrase, "the war to end wars," which was applied by the British to the war of 1914, may have been discredited by the event, it is a rational phrase and describes a rational purpose. Some pacifists may and do contend that "the war to end wars" is a contradiction in terms; but they are wrong. The war that ended in the battle of Actium was such a war, and it produced a peace that lasted four hundred years. But it has to be admitted that a post-atomic war stands in an entirely different category from the war that culminated in the battle of Actium. The destruction it would cause might be irreparable. I fully recognise this; yet I must maintain that a post-atomic war fought by a world-authority against a recalcitrant nation would be a rational war, even though it might conceivably destroy the basis of the rational life itself.

For the alternative to waging such a rational war is more terrible still. It is to condemn mankind to live under the perpetual menace of infinitely destructive wars, and to submit to the consequent paralysis of all rational human endeavour. By avoiding this war, man does not avoid war; he merely makes war more certain and still more destructive. This generation of men should have learned, more surely than any other, that the postponement of a rational war makes it only more fearful.

With open eyes, therefore, I accept the necessity of war waged either by a universal world-authority to coerce a nation which refuses to obey its decision, or by an incomplete world-authority to compel a nation which refuses to enter it. Since I am a member of a pacifist organization in virtue of having signed a pledge saying, "I renounce war, and will never support or sanction another," I will withdraw my pledge and resign my membership; but not without pointing out to its members that neither of these two rational and morally necessary wars are "wars" in the

familiar sense at all. They differ from "war" in the familiar sense much as "justifiable homicide" differs from "murder." To contend that all killing is murder is plain nonsense: killing a fellow human being may be murder, or manslaughter, or justifiable homicide, or legal execution; and the last two are, by the considered wisdom of the ages, reckoned to be necessary to ordered society. It is obvious that precisely the same distinction cannot be made among wars. When a man is killed he is dead. A nation cannot be killed, as an individual person can be. But an analogous distinction must be made among wars. A war that is waged against a nation which refuses to enter, or having entered, refuses to obey a world-authority established to abolish war; a war which will cease the moment the contumacious nation submits itself to the law promulgated by the world-authority—such a war is not a "war" in the common and familiar sense at all, and those who maintain that it is are indulging in the same equivocation as those who maintain that the execution of a murderer is itself murder.

Such a war has never yet been fought in the history of man. There has never been a world-authority; and only in the last fifty years has there been even the faint prospect of establishing one, or the felt need to do so. The modern developments of weapons of mass-destruction, whereby a nation can be virtually annihilated without warning, make the establishment of a world-authority absolutely imperative if civilized life is to continue. Mankind cannot continue to live in incessant peril of sudden mass-destruction. It will demand security, not idly, but in the certain knowledge that security is to be had. Any great power which continues to shroud its war preparations in secrecy will, within a very short space of time, be singled out as the common enemy of mankind: *hostis humani generis*. And the demand will grow overwhelming that it shall be rendered harmless.

Thus, the real choice to-day lies between two things. Either Russia will, however reluctantly, consent to the establishment of a world-authority for the purpose of preventing preparation for war, to whose decisions she will submit; or, if she refuses, then the nations which are willing to submit to such an authority—and they include all the

nations of the world outside the Russian bloc—will combine to render Russia harmless. They will, and must, make war on Russia; and they will not be able to wait until Russia has secretly prepared an overwhelming apparatus of destruction. In the event of their winning the war, which is probable, they will be compelled to destroy the existing Russian state: not because it is Communist, but because it is totalitarian, and designed for secrecy.

That the second of these choices is lamentable, and to be avoided if it is humanly possible, needs no argument. But the decision to avoid it lies wholly with Russia. There is painfully little that the outer world can do to persuade Russia to enter into a new community of nations: but probably some straight talk would be helpful. Have the Russian leaders ever been faced with the consequences of their refusal? Have the statesmen of the outer world really faced them themselves?

Perhaps they have, on both sides. In December, 1946, the issue began to emerge more plainly. The question between Russia and the West narrowed down to the crucial question whether the present Security Council of the United Nations, which is subject to the veto-power, shall or shall not establish another body of greater power than itself. This issue is concealed by the manner in which it has emerged. The Russians, after obvious equivocation and hesitation, have agreed that a commission for inspection and control of armaments should not be subject to the veto of any of its members. At least, Mr. Molotov appeared to make this concession. But, at the moment of writing, they still maintain their position that the commission must be a body subordinate to the Security Council, and therefore its decisions will still be subject to the veto-power of any member of the Security Council. If the Russians maintain this position, then the disarmament commission itself will be quite worthless: and it is evident that neither U.S.A. nor Britain will agree to the establishment of such an organ of deception.²

The original Russian proposal for disarmament appeared to be intended to divert the attention of the outer world from Mr. Baruch's proposals, made on behalf of the U.S.A.,

that the United Nations should establish an Atomic Authority, a supra-national body having complete control and full possession of the means to produce atomic energy throughout the world, and not subject to the veto-power of the Security Council. If it was so intended, the manoeuvre failed completely, as it was bound to fail. The American proposal, which is supported by Britain, is the new and revolutionary thing. It explicitly proposes that the Security Council of the United Nations shall create a body more powerful than itself: more powerful than itself in two ways: first, because it would actually control the development of atomic energy throughout the world, second, because it would not be subject to the veto-power either in itself, or from the Security Council.

Necessarily, the proposed Atomic Authority would be an entirely novel instrument of authority and power. Its personnel would necessarily cease to be citizens of any nation state. This new body would literally control the world: it would control the greatest physical power—whether for the purposes of peace or war—that exists, or will exist, on the earth. It would, in effect, abolish the conception and practice of independent national sovereignty, in so far as sovereignty is expressed in the power to make war.

CHAPTER V

THE ATOMIC AUTHORITY

No doubt, in theory, the Atomic Authority could become a world-tyranny. If its personnel were composed of men who wished to tyrannize over the world, then nothing could prevent it from doing so. If the Atomic Authority is created, then the representatives of the nations hand over to this new body the final power of life and death for the whole world.

It is not easy to imagine—this new sovereign body that will in one sense at least control the world, whose purpose and function will be to prevent the world-anarchy that threatens now, and equitably to share out and administer the mightiest source of physical energy that the world contains. It will not be a world-government, but it will be a world-authority. Perhaps the nearest analogy we shall find for it is the authority of the Popes between 1100 and 1300 A.D. Then the Papal authority co-existed with the secular authority, but was superior to it. The Pope could dethrone Kings. And the reason why the Pope possessed this power was that all men believed that he held the keys of heaven and hell.

To-day all men believe—nay, they know—that the power which controls the atomic energy of the world holds the keys of life and death in this world. Since they have ceased to be interested in the world hereafter, or in their fate in it, the keys of life and death in this world are all that really matters. So, the Atomic Authority can perhaps best be conceived as a Pope whose spiritual power has been transformed into material power; but into a material power which has some analogy to spiritual power, in that it is incommensurable with the forms of material power with which man is familiar. The material power of the Atomic Authority is not adapted, as the spiritual power of the Popes was not adapted, to the details of secular govern-

ment. It could overthrow governments as the Pope could dethrone Kings, but it could not undertake to govern societies. It is essentially, as was the Papacy, an instrument for controlling, in the sense of checking, the governments of the nations : whether by the threat of destruction, or by the withholding of constructive energy.

It would resemble the Papacy in this also that its personnel would be supernational, absolved from all national allegiance, and inviolable. Its installations and offices on every national territory would be as it were sacrosanct ; they would be entirely outside the jurisdiction of the national state : and even though they could hardly offer sanctuary to offenders against the domestic law of the country, as did the mediæval Church, they would represent an authority inherently and evidently superior to that of the national State.

Moreover, if—as would appear to be necessary—the personnel of the Atomic Authority were charged with the duty of seeing that no clandestine attempt was made to produce atomic energy anywhere in the world, except under its own control, the powers with which its personnel would need to be invested would be extraordinary : quite as extraordinary as those of a Papal Legate in the great centuries of the Church.

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes ? The crucial question immediately arises : who would control the Authority ? And the answer is obvious. It could not be controlled by any outside authority whatever. It would be the sovereign power of the world, because it would control the sovereign power of the nation-states precisely in the most vital sphere of their sovereignty—their power to make war. It would take that away from them, and gather all the power of all the nations to make war into its own hands. That is, indeed, all that it would deprive them of. But it is a very great deal.

But an Atomic Authority, like any lesser form of State, in the last resort consists of men. What guarantee can there be that these men will be disinterested, that they will work, and work harmoniously, in the interest of human good ?

The question takes us to the heart of the revolutionary

newness of the proposal. It appears to make the Utopian demand that the personnel of the Atomic Authority shall be a band of brothers, with the unity of a religious order. I do not believe that the demand is Utopian, even though I have Lord Acton's dictum ringing in my ears: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

One must admit that there is, and can be, no absolute guarantee of the disinterestedness of the personnel of the Atomic Authority. But one may nevertheless have a reasonable and grounded confidence that its ethos will be shaped by and adequate to the tremendous magnitude and responsibility of the task. It will be a body of men recruited primarily from the most distinguished physical scientists of every nation: men who already have something of the ethos of a supra-national confraternity, and who, as a class, have shown themselves to be more deeply exercised than any other class of men by the appalling perils which now threaten the human race. It is true that these appalling perils have been directly caused by their own activities; it is they who invented the atomic bomb, propounded its theory, and carried that theory into practice. They bear a fearful responsibility for the condition of peril in which the human race now stands.

For I do not think it can be denied that on a group of American, Canadian and British physicists must fall the real responsibility for allowing the atomic bombs to be dropped upon Japan. It is not possible, in this matter, to accept the defence that the decision was the decision of the political authorities of America. That is true enough in bare fact. In all probability the actual decision was made by President Truman. But it seems certain that the physicists had it in their power to nullify that decision. The story goes that they were deeply perplexed, and made a recommendation that the dropping of the bombs should be delayed while an ultimatum was served upon Japan; but they did not dispute that the power of decision rested with the political head of the State. I think they should not only have disputed that claim, but they should have resolved to withhold their services from the State if their recommendation was not accepted.

Just as some physicists at this critical moment in human history failed in their duty to mankind as a whole in this way, so did others in a quite different and more serious way. Other, less important, physicists who had been concerned with the making of the atomic bomb, broke away from their allegiance to their own nation-state, and tried to communicate the technical secret to the nation-state of Soviet Russia. That, I think, was definitely perverse. Their action could be justified only if it were true that the Russian state was itself genuinely supra-national and morally superior to other nation-states, and therefore had a higher claim to the physicists' allegiance than their own. For reasons which have been already given I hold this to be demonstrably false. That the misguided physicists may sincerely have believed it to be true is a warning that the ethos of scientists is not invariably of a high order, and that their powers of moral discrimination are sometimes palpably inferior to those of ordinary men.

Soviet Russia is, in some sense, a supra-national state, because it actually commands the allegiance of a considerable number of citizens of other nation-states. The members of the Communist Party, in other countries than Russia, definitely regard the interests of Soviet Russia as having precedence over the interests of their own. If these other countries, which now tolerate the activities of the Communist Party, were organized on the same pattern as Soviet Russia itself, the Communist parties would have been liquidated long ago; and it may conceivably prove to be a fatal moral weakness in the democracies that they have not definitely proscribed parties which are avowedly intolerant themselves. The true principle, I have little doubt, is that a tolerant society should tolerate everything except intolerance; and I believe it is due to moral confusion rather than an active loyalty to the principles of the free society that the democracies tolerate the activities of the Communist parties.

However that may be, I hold it to be demonstrable that Soviet Russia is a supra-national state only in the sense that it is a conspiratorial organization with devoted adherents in the democratic countries, who, in fact, retain their

national allegiance only for the purpose of working more effectively in the interests of Soviet Russia. No doubt, many of them cherish the illusion that in working for the interests of Soviet Russia they are working for the interests of mankind as a whole; but that is because they are blind to the plain fact that the interests of mankind as a whole depend upon the preservation of the free society. They have joined, through shallowness of understanding, an international conspiracy to subvert the free society.

International Communism, to-day, is a perverse caricature of the mediæval Church. It can be likened to the Roman Church in post-Reformation days, when it degenerated into a political conspiracy against the new Protestant nation-states. Very much as Spain was then the political embodiment of this secularly militant Catholicism in its warfare against the embryonic free societies, so is Soviet Russia now the political embodiment of the militant drive of dictatorial and totalitarian Socialism against the fully developed free societies. We must hope that the effort will fail as signally as did the effort of Spain.

That many minor scientists have made themselves instrumental to this conspiracy for the aggrandisement of Soviet Russia—largely, I believe, because they suppose, perhaps truly, that Soviet Russia gives to scientists of their class and type a position of power and prestige much greater than that which they command in the free societies—makes it the more imperative that men of science of a higher order should dissociate themselves, with entire clarity, from this perverted conception of universality of science. The means to do so, in a creative and revolutionary fashion, is to associate themselves wholeheartedly and with entire devotion with the formation of the Atomic Authority. This, and not international Communism, is the true modern analogue to the mediæval Church during the period of its beneficence, when it was indeed the guardian of civilization in Europe. It is by their attitude towards the Atomic Authority that the sheep will be quickly discriminated from the goats among men of science. In the Atomic Authority the true concept of the universality of science will be embodied in an institution, whose high purposes are to abolish war

between the nations and to distribute on a basis of equity the inexhaustible supplies of atomic energy.

It is by no means an accident that it is Soviet Russia which is, at the present moment, seeking to evade the proposal for an Atomic Authority. In the last analysis, that need of evasion is due to the fact that the leaders of Soviet Russia do not desire to abolish war; they desire to postpone it until such time as they will be certain of victory, or far more certain than they are now. They believe that war is necessary and inevitable, because the final triumph of Communism cannot be secured without it. That is, indeed, true. Communism cannot triumph throughout the world except after a world-war. In all probability it would not triumph even then. But without a world-war the triumph of Communism is inconceivable. The only kind of Communism that could triumph without this bloody prelude is a Communism which would have entirely changed its nature and its doctrine, and transformed itself into the peaceful socialism of a free society. Such a triumph of Communism would be its most signal defeat.

Nor again is it an accident that it is precisely a socialism of this peaceful kind which, even without deliberately intending it, the Atomic Authority would necessarily promote. Its main creative function would be the equitable distribution of the world's supply of atomic energy. But what is an equitable distribution of atomic energy between the nations? On what principles can it be based? Surely not on the commercial principle that each nation can have what it can pay for. Shall it be in accordance with the actual population? But the most populous nations of the world, China and India, are the most industrially backward. They could not, for many years, make use of their allotment, unless very great help were given them in the provision of capital equipment to turn the energy to constructive purposes.

The more one thinks about this simple problem, the more evident it becomes that the creation of the Atomic Authority involves our passing into a new dimension of political thought; and that the true world-communism is not that which Soviet Russia would force upon the world at

the cost of civil and international war, but that which will inevitably arise from the practical functioning of the Atomic Authority in pursuit of its primary aim: to make war impossible. That aim, it is already openly acknowledged, cannot be fulfilled unless the Atomic Authority has a monopoly of the production of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, or unless it is largely concerned with the constructive development of atomic power. Thus the Atomic Authority must, by the compulsion of its own being, become a kind of Tennessee Valley Authority for the whole world.³ It must operate on principles of universal social justice. However difficult it may be to formulate such principles and to apply them on a world-wide scale, the difficulty must be overcome. The Atomic Authority will be compelled to solve the problem of distributive justice between the nations.

It is only a particular example of the fundamental problem discussed in the first chapter. Since war is the final arbiter between the claims of nations, the abolition of war must create an intolerable vacuum, unless a new institution for deciding what is just in accordance with the principles of a higher justice is established. The international "justice" of war is based entirely upon the determination of a preponderance of power; the international justice that must be made sovereign when war is abolished must be radically different from this.

CHAPTER VI

THE ENIGMA OF RUSSIA

THE difficulty of abolishing war, I believe, lies chiefly not in the untameable savagery of man, but in the difficulty of determining what is just. The only practicable principle we could discover was the majority, or democratic, principle: which is not so much a principle of justice as a means of enabling the just course to be discovered. It operates by excluding violence as a method of decision, and thus enabling "the sense of the meeting" to be gradually elicited.

To establish justice by the majority principle appeared to be the only way of abolishing war. But the conception of the Atomic Authority opens up a rather different perspective. For obviously, if it is to be established "within the framework of the United Nations"—to use the favourite phrase of the Russian delegates—it will be established unanimously. That momentary and *ad hoc* unanimity (if we may suppose, for argument's sake, that it is forthcoming) will engender an institution in which the majority principle can only with difficulty be imagined to be decisive. The practical operation of such an authority appears to demand something like a perpetual unanimity, or at least something a good deal nearer to it than the traditional democratic relation of government and opposition, or majority and freely tolerated minority. What really happens when we try to envisage this problem in the concrete is that our thought passes away from the familiar political sphere into an unfamiliar and novel territory that lies between the political and the functional. Probably the most important and characteristic institutions of the civilization of the future (if civilization is allowed to have a future) will be built in this unfamiliar and novel territory. At any rate, I am compelled to conceive the actual working of the Atomic Authority as more like that of a great in-

dustrial enterprise than a sovereign assembly. It is a pity that the phrase Public Utility has been smeared by association with some of the worst financial exploitation of the public; but, if we take the phrase in its pristine meaning, a Public Utility Corporation serving the whole world is what the Atomic Authority would have to be.

Its personnel, recruited from all the nations and resigning their national allegiance, would realize in fact the ideal which has attracted men's minds ever since the Stoics first formulated it: they would be "citizens of the world-city." Their positive life-work would be to manifest justice in act. They would ignore the claims of nations, as nations, and ponder the claims of peoples, as peoples, yet always, necessarily, in relation to their actual economic development. An abstract justice would be unavailing. The point of focus would be the question: What is best for the given people, here and now? And the mind of the Atomic Authority would be free from the temptation which frequently assails the most disinterested minds in their search for the principles of a better social order amid the anarchy of to-day: the temptation to turn back from the social reality. The immutable characteristic of that reality is that the physical energy at the disposal and under the control of Man has increased at least a hundredfold in the last hundred years. That increase in the physical energy which Man can devote to the act of war has completely destroyed the clumsy rationality of war as the final arbiter of the world's rough justice. The universal sense that it is necessary—indeed, the "one thing necessary"—to abolish war arises directly from the colossal increase in the production of physical energy, which has turned the cruel beneficence of war into absolutely unmitigated evil. But, in the desperate search for an escape from war, to succumb to the temptation to imagine or desire that the new sources of physical energy shall be abolished is to surrender to fantasy, and to seek to obliterate the very cause and motive of the search. Those who hanker after the pre-machine age and the pre-industrial world, in their hunger for world-peace, are the victims of an inward contradiction.

From this contradiction the mind of the Atomic Authority

would be immune. Still more important, it would also be immune from the more subtle dissociation which has invalidated so much thought on the human predicament. This dissociation has arisen from the fact that, in the past, the great spectacular increases in the physical energy available to man have presented themselves in peaceful guises. The steam-engine extracting the energy from coal; the internal combustion engine extracting the energy from oil; hydro-electricity extracting the energy from water—these, as they appeared, seemed straightforwardly beneficent. It was, so to speak, only by a second thought, that they were harnessed to the chariot of War. And although, in a longer perspective and more objective view, it might be argued that the cannon was the first practical internal combustion engine, only the discovery of methods for the regular and controlled release of the stored energy of nature could make possible a constructive use of that energy; and it was the constructive use of the energy which was diverted to war. Again, though it is true that these new devices for the regular and controlled release of latent energy vastly increased the pressure towards war, because they vastly increased the amount of manufactured commodities which must either be sold or given away and, owing to obsolescent political systems, of property rights at home, and national sovereignty abroad, neither course was possible, so that the consumption of war was the only means of keeping the machinery of production in motion—this chain of cause and effect was visible only to Karl Marx and his followers. To the somewhat superficial, but very natural, mentality of the average man, the revolutionary developments in the exploitation of the energy of nature presented themselves as making for peace.

This belief was held even more firmly in Britain than elsewhere: again, for a good reason, of which few were fully conscious. The reason was that Britain had a virtual monopoly of the new arts in their early stages, because of her ample and easy supplies of coal; and her monopoly of the new arts gave her a huge preponderance of effective and cheap military power—in the form of an overwhelming navy—by which she could practically impose peace on the

world, or at any rate, by throwing her influence about, prevent wars from becoming totally irrational. Thus a period of relative peace, during which Britain pushed on with her economic penetration of the world, was, in fact, causally dependent upon Britain's prior development of the new sources of energy. But not many Britons admitted to consciousness that the real link between these two things was Britain's military preponderance, based on the new control of energy: most men believed that the new energy and the new productiveness were themselves inherently peaceful.

No such comfortable illusion can veil the new release of atomic energy. Its destructive potentiality was the first to be revealed to the awe-struck and bewildered world. Its constructive potentialities, though they are even more impressive and revolutionary, are the after-thought. Nevertheless, to the scientific mind the constructive and destructive potentialities are simultaneously given, and *they are technologically inseparable*. This multi-dimensional gunpowder is, so to speak, also the elixir of life. It shatters and creates. It opens to the vision and the control of man "the core of eternal fierce destruction" which appalled and uplifted the poet Keats. It makes the intuitions and the paradoxes of metaphysicians the diet of the common mind. Or so it should; and so it must, or mankind and all its works will be sucked into the vortex of destruction to which its scientists have bored their way.

Yet, to an objective mind—even to a Marxist mind: and a dose of Marxism is necessary to objectivity—is offered the fantastic spectacle of Marxist Russia reacting to this revolutionary and incommensurable increase in man's powers of production with the mentality of the Tsardom. That is really an insult to the last Romanov who, at least, reacted to the situation at the end of the 19th century with an invitation to a World-Peace Conference. The Ivan the Terribles of the Soviet Union have to be cajoled into one.

Karl Marx, whatever his limitations, was a man of intense vision. He saw, with a clarity unique in his generation, that the new powers of production must largely determine the character of the coming civilization. If he

had lived to see the release of nuclear energy he would straightway have reconsidered his political philosophy from its foundations. He would not only have seen that the class-war fought to an issue with atomic bombs is an outrage to sanity; he would have seen that the supra-national control of this energy was necessary to the continuance of human life on this planet; he would have seen that it offered the direct way to the socialization of the means of production. It would not have mattered a hoot to him that the proposal for the establishment of an Atomic Authority came from capitalist America. Even capitalists, he knew, were obedient to the necessities created by the development of power-production; even capitalists, he knew, would shrink from the menace of world-destruction when it stared them in the face. He knew that capitalists, in abolishing war, would abolish capitalism. What he could never have foreseen was that Russian Communists, professing to be his disciples, would refuse to abolish war when invited to co-operate, on the ground that to abolish war would impeach the sovereignty of their nation-state.

The paradox by which the adherents of Marxist socialism claim that it is embodied in a secretive national state is itself a flat outrage to Marx, proceeding from the fact that the most determined group of Russian revolutionaries happened to be led and indoctrinated by Lenin. The state-power was seized in the sacred name of Marx. But the tradition of Byzantinism and bureaucracy quickly reasserted itself. Stalin proved himself a past-master in the age-old Byzantine practices of palace-conspiracy and palace-revolution, and having quietly liquidated the old guard of Bolsheviks, appeared in glory as the Marxist Tsar of All the Russias. All that remained of Marxism was a determination to press on, with all the power of the Russian state, with the ruthless industrialization of Russia. Since this is a historic fact, we must make the best of it; but we shall not, if we retain a modicum of sanity, see in it anything more inspiring than it actually contains, or shut our eyes to the immense potentiality of evil that lies in a Byzantine state-socialism, dominant in a politically aggressive nation-state.

MAIX would be astonished indeed at the equivocal monster which he had inspired to birth, and would have been only too anxious to challenge its paternity. Mr. Baruch, a member of the same sceptical and visionary race, has taken on the job for him. The proposal of the Atomic Authority puts Soviet Russia on the spot. For it is the acid test of whether Russia has any beneficent significance for humanity at all. If it has, then after no matter what initial wiggings and equivocations, the leaders of the Soviet Union will consent to the establishment of an Atomic Authority on the lines laid down by Mr. Baruch and Mr. Lilienthal. No one will imagine that it will not be difficult for them, for they will not fail to see that consent involves the gradual demolition of most of the reactionary superstructure they have built on the ideological foundation of a perverted Marxism. If they consent, their apparent victory at the end of World War II will prove to have been specious and short-lived. It deserved no better fate. It was the double-dealing of Stalin which unleashed the efficient barbarism of Hitler on Europe; and the efficient barbarism of Hitler was largely inspired by and patterned on the efficient barbarism with which Soviet Russia had contaminated the Socialist faith. The destruction of Europe by which Soviet Russia has seemingly profited was almost as much her own work as it was that of Hitler.

Nor was it her own efficient barbarism which saved Soviet Russia herself from destruction, when these two contemporary demonisms came to the death-grapple. It was first the heroic and legendary endurance of the simple Russian soldier, and second the technical aid poured into Russia by American productivity and British bravery. If there is any large justice at work in the affairs of men, it is not from such a moral foundation that the efficient barbarism of Soviet Russia will establish itself in the home of civilisation. If there is no such large justice, why then the Russian power may be as solid as it seems. That will seem monstrous to those who obstinately believe that it was because Macbeth had "sold his eternal jewel unto the common enemy of man" that he falsely cried:

Life is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

If that is false, then all that is false in the power of Soviet Russia is bound to crumble. And it is precisely with the direct challenge to reject what is false in that outwardly imposing structure of power that the proposal of an Atomic Authority confronts Russia. The reason for her hesitation is clear. To accept and participate in the establishment of such an authority involves the disintegration of all the gruesome paraphernalia of the modern super-police-state. If there is any alternative of evasion, any smoke-screen available whereby the potentates of Moscow could seem to consent, and yet refuse, we may be certain that they will choose it. Dictators are reluctant to sign their own death-warrants. But, in reality, no evasion is possible, because it will be immediately apparent for what it is—a stark refusal.

Then the nemesis will be inevitable. The rulers of Russia will have deliberately condemned the world to war, rather than reject from their system the efficient barbarism with which they have contaminated the Socialist faith. The nations of the outer world will not consent to live under the intolerable menace of Russian secrecy. They will form their Atomic Authority, but they will form it without Russia and against Russia; and rather than wait for the new destruction to be loosed upon them out of the darkness of Russia, they will threaten to loose it upon her.

Russia must submit. The choices before her reduce to two. Either she will freely consent to the establishment of the Atomic Authority, or she will refuse and by her refusal create such fear in the outer world that they will “compel her to come in.” The first alternative is by far the better; but it would be foolish to suppose that it is, as it should be, an easy choice to make. It does involve an internal revolution in Russia, a fairly speedy dismantling of all the elaborate machinery of repression which the rulers have built up ostensibly to safeguard their experiment in Socialism. It is really inconceivable that an institution

such as the Atomic Authority would have to be, should function securely and fully in the territory of Soviet Russia without disseminating the damnable heresies of freedom. Free men would be constantly journeying over the length and breadth of Russia, questioning freely, reporting freely, yet in their persons inviolable. And some of these free men would be Russians, former citizens of Soviet Russia, who had stepped out of the closed system into the larger air of the new world-citizenship. Even the American and British members of the Authority, who will not be so strange to the atmosphere of freedom, will find this particular atmosphere of exalted freedom—the perfect freedom of entire service to humanity—rich and strange. The Russians may find it overpowering.

Yet will they? After all, they will bring to the new harmony of minds a quality and experience of their own. They will be men of science; and though they will have learned that serving science is not the same thing as serving Soviet Russia, they will have had the experience of working in a great national society which is moving according to plan. That is something which will be more novel to their British and American colleagues than it is to them. It is something which the Russians will be able to teach them, and which they will need to learn. Not that the Russian men of science work according to plan, whereas the American and British—or Danish or Austrian—do not. The planning of scientific research is common to both. But the combination of *planned scientific inquiry with a policy of planned social justice*, will be in essence more familiar to the Russians than the others. Their experience of it will have been warped by the continuous diversion of so much Russian productivity to the preparation for war, against the external or the internal enemy, but nevertheless it will be experience of a kind which will be novel to their colleagues and of great value for their new work.

We need not doubt that the Russians will have their contribution to make to the new synthesis of experience which the Atomic Authority will require and will create. But they will be like pianists translated from a miniature piano to a concert grand. Of the combination of servitude

and service which they have experienced, the servitude will be sloughed off, and sloughed off because they will now be serving humanity instead of the Russian state. They will fulfil the prophecy of Dostoevsky : " The Russian wanderer must seek the peace of all men in order to find his own."

Such men, Russian by speech and experience, but now free as no Russian has been for twenty-five years from the fear of the Russian state, cannot fail to be symbols and apostles of freedom in their own country, embodiments of that long forgotten and discredited anticipation of Marx that under Socialism " the state would wither away." They would be channels for the expounding of the true sentiments of some of the finest minds in the outer world. That part of the political fabric of contemporary Russia which could stand up for long against their evidence and their example would deserve to stand.

To all this, and much more which I cannot imagine, the present fabric of the Russian state would be constantly exposed by the existence of the Atomic Authority on its territory. At the same time, by the mere existence of the Atomic Authority, the incessant propaganda to the effect that Russia is surrounded by deadly and scheming enemies would become completely nonsensical. If the cement of the Russian police-state is, as I believe, the inculcated fear of the outer world, the removal of that fear alone would work more than a palace-revolution. It would cause a profound liberation in the psyche of the Russian people, against which the present Russian state would be unable to stand.

For these two reasons—the first, that the actual establishments of the Atomic Authority on Russian territory would be centres from which the contagion of freedom would be incessantly disseminated ; the second, that the removal of the fear of war would dissolve the most powerful cement of the present Russian state—the controllers of the Russian state will be aware that, if they consent to the establishment of the Atomic Authority, they will be consenting to their own abdication, or, at least, to such a transformation of the political system of Russia as will make their tenure of power as precarious as that of a democratic government of the

West. Though there is nothing in the public record of any of them that suggests that they are capable of such deliberate self-abnegation, and nothing in their public utterances that indicates that any of them have a deeper understanding or a wider vision of the human situation than is permitted by the blinkets of pseudo-Marxism, it is impossible to say dogmatically that they are incapable of the inward revolution that is required of them. One can only say that it seems improbable. They are fanatical men, and they have immense power—far greater power than is possessed by any ruling group in the world today. It would be strange if they were found willing to resign it.

But Russia was always a strange country; and it has become far stranger under the Soviet regime. The Westerner, who owes so much to the Russian genius for enlarging his spiritual understanding of human life, to whose thought a Gogol, a Turgenev, a Tolstoi, a Dostoevsky, a Tchekhov seemed each to have added a new dimension of charity, is utterly perplexed by the apparently complete disappearance of this pre-eminently Russian strain of universalism—"pan-humanism," as Dostoevsky called it—since the Russian Revolution. It seems to him that the Russian soul must be enduring, on a titanic scale, one of those "self-lacerations" which Dostoevsky declared to be typical: an immense repression of all its mighty urge towards human brotherhood. He cannot help imagining that at some moment of crisis the flood will break the dams and sweep, in waves of liberation, over the tormented world. He cannot help imagining that Russian Communism, as it has manifested itself so far, is a terrible caricature of the true purpose of Russia for the world—in its sham universalism, its sham brotherhood, its sham liberations, and its sham democracy: a caricature which Russia will suddenly repudiate.

All this may be sheer fantasy: but no-one who has had his thought, his experience, his imagination and his sympathy permanently enlarged by the Russian genius, will be able easily to abandon the hope. For it is much more than a hope he must abandon. With it goes the belief in some great justice working itself out in human history.

That the defeated German people should pay such a frightful penalty as they are paying today for their brief worship of false and cruel gods : while the victorious Russian people should be permanently compelled to worship—even if unwillingly—gods equally false and equally cruel—this is a mockery of justice. That under cover of a Socialist creed which, with all its aberrations, did set before the world the ideal of a humane world-unity, the rulers of Russia should drive humanity towards the abyss of another and far more terrible world-war—this is an intolerable thought: as it were an ultimate cynicism, like the diabolical empty room with a spider in the corner which was Svidrigailov's vision of eternity.

It is in order to avert this bleak horror from human destiny, it is in order not to be compelled, like Ivan Karamazov, "to hand back the ticket" to God, that one says to oneself, "Russia must change." And I do profoundly believe that Russia will change, and become a light instead of a doom to human aspirations. But much as I long to believe it, I cannot see the hard-faced men at the Kremlin becoming the willing instruments of the change.

I may be wronging them. I hope I am. I hope they will yield to the necessity of humanity, and by consenting to the establishment of the new instrument of human freedom, avert the alternative which I believe to be inexorable if they refuse, namely, that Russia should be compelled to come in by the threat of war, and, if the leaders of Russia still refuse, by war.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHALLENGE TO RUSSIA

I CANNOT escape the conclusion that until there is a radical change in the Russian system and the Russian state—a change which permits honest and continuous contact between the Russian people and the other peoples of the world—the nations of the outer world will become more and more enslaved to the necessity of preparation for war. So long as Russian secrecy exists, so long the world will live in ever-increasing fear. U.S.A. at this moment possesses an overwhelming strength in the atomic weapon. Is there a nation in all the world—except Russia—which fears that the U.S.A. will loose that destruction upon it? If Russia possessed that absolute atomic supremacy which U.S.A. now possesses, is there a nation in all the world which would not be afraid?

That is the bare truth of the situation. Since it is so, unless Russia abandons her secrecy, the nations of the outer world will prepare for war and will unite for war, against Russia. What preparation for the new kind of war means may be left to the imagination. But one point needs to be stressed. It means that the democracies will have to make a radical change in their political system. For it is not conceivable that in future the people or their representatives should be consulted before the country is plunged in war. War will be instantaneous, begun without warning, by the loosing of a flight of controlled weapons of mass-destruction, which will be countered instantaneously by the loosing of a similar flight. The central controls of this apparatus of destruction must be on either side an *imperium in imperio*: the tempo of political democracy is incompatible with the necessity of instantaneous decision. Instant, and indeed automatic, reaction will be required. It is possible that it will have to be literally automatic,

without the human mind intervening at all. Furthermore, the whole citizenry of democracy will have to be drilled into an elaborate system by which those parts of the country which escape without destruction and paralysis may be able to carry on some sort of organized life, and prepare to resist the attempt at invasion and occupation that will follow the preliminary destruction.

It is impossible to believe that the democracies will despairingly but tamely submit to this organization for the new total war. I cannot imagine the people of U.S.A. sitting down under it, patiently organising themselves under the necessary functional autocracy, and waiting for the blow to fall. They will demand a preventive war against the country which condemns them to this fantastic and intolerable existence; and their instinctive demand will be wholly rational. It is obviously better, morally and materially, to take the initiative in such a situation. The initiative offers a chance of liberation: to wait merely means a perpetuity of enslavement. The crucial question is whether the initiative will be taken in time, while the technological superiority remains with the free societies.

Preventive war has an ugly sound. In relation to the power-situation of the pre-atomic age, it was an ugly thing. It must always be a horrible thing, but that is because it is war. In the atomic age preventive war, waged by the nations which desire to establish an Atomic Authority against the nation which refuses, though it will remain in itself a horrible thing, is nevertheless a morally good thing. It is morally better to take the initiative in compelling an outlaw nation to give up its secrecy, by all the fearful methods of atomic war, than to submit to the kind of existence which would be imposed by the effort to prepare for a war of defence against the outlaw nation. That is clear to me. Possibly it may be better still, morally, to ignore the outlaw nation completely, to carry on undisturbed with one's peaceful avocations—in a word, to disarm. But it is a counsel of perfection—for a nation of saints, a nation of people far more spiritually advanced than any association of professed pacifists that I have met (and I think I have met them all); and, in any case, it is

inconceivable that it should be followed by a nation like the U.S.A.

No responsible democratic leader of U.S.A. would dream of advocating it. It runs clean counter to the noblest political tradition of the United States, which I take to be that of Abraham Lincoln. There is a manifest analogy between the situation which forced Lincoln's reluctant but unshakable decision to compel the Southern States to remain in the Union, and the situation to-day. A modern Lincoln would apply himself to making the issue crystal-clear to his fellow-countrymen, and if he could find means, to the Russian people also. The issue is world-union or world-anarchy: world-union or world-slavery. The rulers of Russia, he would say, cannot be permitted to refuse world-union, and thereby to condemn the world to anarchy and slavery. If they will not consent, they must be compelled, to come in.

"The rulers of Russia," he would say, "pretend that they dare not enter the world-union into which we invite them, because they would cease to be their own masters, and because their beneficent system of social organization would be at the mercy of the other members of the union. They would no longer be able to defend it. But if their system of social organization is so beneficent, why do they fear that it will be attacked? I do not believe that the social organization of these United States is perfect. I believe it is good, because the American people are free to make it better. But we are not afraid to enter the world-union: on the contrary, it is what we desire and demand. We, no less than the Russians, shall cease to be our own masters; we, like them, shall be unable to defend the system which we prize. Why are we, unlike them, not afraid that it will be taken from us?"

"We are not afraid, simply because we know that it is after such a system that free men everywhere aspire. We are confident that no nation in all the world—except Russia—harbours designs against the free society of the United States. We are so confident of this that we are willing to trust ourselves completely to the good-will of the world. The rulers of Russia are not prepared to do

so ; and because they are not, they are prepared to condemn the world to war and anarchy and slavery.

"The rulers of Russia claim that they have liberated their citizens from slavery. They claim that the Russian^{*} people enjoy such perfect freedom that the rest of the world is envious of it—so envious that it will seek to take it away from them. This freedom of the Russian people is so perfect and entire that the direst penalties are enacted upon those who seek to escape from it. Is it any wonder that we refuse to believe that it exists? We say, quite simply, Put your freedom to the test. Allow your citizens to move freely among the outer world. Allow the citizens of the outer world to move freely among yours. And see what happens.

"We ask no more than this. Yet the rulers of Russia refuse it. What shall a sane man conclude? That the rulers of Russia are terrified of what would happen if their peoples were exposed to the experience of freedom. That this is the reason why they refuse to enter the world-community into which we invite them. That this is the reason why they cling to their secrecy, and keep the free societies of the outer world in mortal fear.

"We refuse to be pushed into the abyss by the secrecy of Russia. We make one last offer to her. We have made it many times. We have gone on making it till we are weary to death of the incessant evasion with which it is met. We make it once again. If the rulers of Russia do not consent to the establishment of the Atomic Authority, and do not permit its officers to move freely and inviolably throughout the length and breadth of their territory as they will through ours, we shall compel them to do so by war. We call upon the Russian people to insist that their rulers shall give way to a demand that is made not by their enemies, but by their friends—to a summons that comes from the reason and the conscience of humanity."

Sooner or later it is in some such terms that the outer world will have to speak to the rulers, and if it can, to the people of Russia. The quicker the issue can be made absolutely clear the better. What is to be dreaded is a

period of moral confusion in which the vague and universal dread of the atomic war will paralyse men's wills, as the dread of aerial war did in the years previous to 1939. A period of appeasement of Russia, like the period of appeasement of Nazi Germany, will only expose the free societies to the ravages of cynicism: and a period of "getting tough with Russia" will be no better. It is imperative that the issue shall be clarified into one of self-evident principle, and not concealed and falsified by a series of manoeuvres in which the opponents seek to establish a new equipoise of power. The threat of war, if it must be used, must be used openly and on plain conditions, which will make it clear that the war which it threatens is not a power-struggle between Russia and America for the domination of the world.

It is, first and foremost, a struggle to abolish war. That the only way, in this world, to abolish war is to threaten to wage it, and to be firm in the intention to wage it, is not a self-evident contradiction, as many pacifists assert it to be. It is a paradox that lends itself to sophistical exploitation, by those who refuse to admit that war to establish the jurisdiction of an authority that will abolish war is not war. That war, of any kind, is an intolerable evil no right-minded man will deny: or that it is a far greater evil in the atomic age than it was in 1914 or in 1939. It is so great an evil that there can be only one political purpose in the minds of rational and civilized men to-day: to abolish war. For that purpose and that purpose only can a rational and civilized man consent to the waging of war to-day. To wage war, for the defence of Capitalism, for the defence of Communism, for "the defence of one's country" even, in the ordinary sense of the phrase—all these things to-day are absurd and evil. There is but one justification for waging war in the world to-day: in order to abolish war.

That is its only justification; and it is its complete justification. A war that is definitely and deliberately waged to achieve this supreme human purpose, and for no other end at all, does by the very fact of its being so waged, change the nature and redeem the evil of war. Were it not too startling a paradox, I would say that when

a war is waged for this purpose and for no other end at all, war *is* abolished. War has changed to something different, to something infinitely nobler than war has ever been. On the one side are those who fight solely to abolish war ; on the other are those who fight solely to perpetuate it. It is the war of Order against Chaos, the Law against Anarchy : it is the act of Justice.

There is now an evil worse than war, and that is for human existence to continue under the menace of it—war, with the known and unknown potentialities of the new modes of devastation ; war, of which the only thing that is certain is that it will come with lightning suddenness. Mankind cannot *live* under the perpetual menace of obliteration. And it is far better that a new kind of war for a plain and self-evident moral end should be deliberately waged than that this incessant degradation of human life should continue.

But it is absolutely imperative that it shall be free of the slightest taint of moral ambiguity. To this end what are, in a purely technical consideration, enormous risks must be taken. A clear summons, in the form of an ultimatum, must be given to the recalcitrant nation ; and the ultimatum must allow of a sufficient interval of time for passive resistance, or active rebellion against the Government, to develop among the people. Militarily, this is sheer folly. But this is a war which is not war. And the conditions of surrender must be simple and lucid in themselves, so that they can be understood by the people to whom they are primarily addressed, and to whom they must be communicated by all the technical ingenuity the united world can muster. Further, they must be accompanied by a solemn pledge that no punishment of any sort will be exacted in the event of surrender before the ultimatum expires, or any save the bare reparation for damage done if surrender is delayed till after defeat in war. Above all else, it will be made crystal-clear that only one thing is demanded : that the recalcitrant and outlaw nation shall enter the community of nations, and obey the law which it has refused to recognise or has broken.

I do not believe that such a war would have to be fought ;

but there can be no certainty that it would not have to be. National leaders who had refused all the many preliminary offers that would necessarily have been made in the period prior to the ultimatum would be desperate and lawless men, who might rather precipitate chaos than surrender their power. They would be likely to make their attack as an instantaneous riposte to the ultimatum. On the other hand, if the union of the outer world behaved with simplicity of mind and singleness of purpose, these same leaders would be morally isolated from their people, and their rule increasingly revealed as a soulless and fanatical tyranny. They would be in a far weaker position than is easily supposed. On the whole my belief is firm and well grounded that such a war would not have to be fought, provided all the necessary conditions were fulfilled, as they have been outlined above. But one condition is necessary above all others : that there should be a clear, firm and unshakable determination to wage the war if the terms of the ultimatum were not accepted.

In other words, there must be no attempt, nor desire, to avoid war, but only to abolish war. It is the immoral confusion between these two contradictory and irreconcilable purposes which has vitiated British official policy and British pacifism alike for many years. Neither has been prepared to pay the price of abolishing war. British official policy has refused to pay the price of a clear and purposeful offer to surrender what is necessary to be surrendered of national sovereignty. British pacifism has refused to pay the price of a firm determination to support war deliberately waged against nations which refused to surrender what was necessary of their sovereignty. Both have in the past preferred to seek to avoid war, rather than suffer the sacrifice of the ego—national sovereignty in the one case, a so-called principle in the other—which is demanded by the resolve to abolish war.

The situation has changed. The material situation of mankind has undergone a revolutionary and catastrophic change. Britain has reached the point at which, in order to be secure from war, she is willing to resign all that is necessary of her national sovereignty. That is natural

enough, having regard to her now appalling vulnerability. What is more surprising is that America has taken the initiative in making the same offer. The Baugh proposals are, precisely, an offer to surrender sovereignty to the exact extent required if war is to be abolished. But British pacifism boggles at them, and takes refuge from reality in an unholy combination of the Utopian policy of unilateral disarmament and a practical policy of unlimited appeasement, and proclaims that if it cannot have the Kingdom of Heaven on earth it prefers and will connive at complete anarchy.

There must be no attempt, nor desire, to avoid war, but only to abolish war. No desire to avoid war? Yes, no desire. In my experience, the more steadily one contemplates the fearful condition of a world in which, perhaps for a generation, war is avoided but not abolished, one ceases even to desire to avoid war. Not a generation, but ten more years, of continued existence in a world of nations seeking merely to avoid war will witness such a degradation of human morality, such a continuous disintegration of purposeful living, that a war to abolish war will come as a moral and spiritual liberation, in spite of all its horrors. Indeed, to speak the exact truth, at the price of a seeming extravagance of paradox, the very horror of the war would contain its self-evident justification. For men who could deliberately and with open eyes enter into this horror, for the sole purpose of doing it to death, once for all, would be finer and nobler than they are to-day. Their lives and their deaths would be dedicated to that "high human purpose" to which the soul of man aspires.

Some glimmering of this purpose has always shone before the eyes of the happy warrior. It was that which upheld the noblest army which this country has ever sent forth to battle—the volunteers of 1914, who truly offered themselves to fight "the war to end wars" and were pitifully betrayed. It upheld those many who, in the second world-war, after a deep inward struggle against their sense of the futility and bestiality of war and a despair of the outcome of their sacrifice, nevertheless decided that they could

not stand apart, though the Law offered them the freedom to do so. It was, in many cases, precisely that freedom to stand aside which turned the scale : they felt that they could not but defend the existence of the free society, whose morality was vivid and incarnate in their own inward struggle. They were sustained by a kind of desperate faith that, battered, bruised, and covered with filth though the free society was bound to be, degraded and sick to death, yet the seed of a nobler future might be contained in it. The tragedy was that both for the innocent warriors of 1914 and the sophisticated warriors of 1939 the purpose of their sacrifice was contaminated by sordidness in which they had no share, and over which they had no control. The intrigues of statesmen, the cupidity of interests, exploited their heroism.

But a war which is purified of this obscene ambiguity, a war which is waged solely for a purpose for which any man, with a sense of human dignity and responsibility, must be prepared to lay down his life, a war which is saved from the outset from all possibility of contamination, is something which men of to-day, caught in the massive degradation of a life condemned to purposelessness, could truly regard as a deliverance. Not the war itself, but the upsurge of a common willingness to wage it, a common repudiation of the desire to avoid war by the firmness of the common resolution to abolish it—this, I am convinced, would be experienced as a true liberation from the profound frustration, the half shamefaced, half cynical materialism in which we live.

This is the only true reply to the challenge of Communism—the false religion of materialism which makes its mass-conversions in the spiritual vacuum of to-day, and twists the uneasy and conscience-stricken materialism of young and ardent men into a materialist fanaticism, a self-torturing repudiation of the very spirit of the free society. Communism embodies the drive to universalise the slave-society, in which men have the glorious burden of responsibility taken from them in vulgar exchange for promised material advantages which never can accrue. These advantages cannot accrue because the Communist society

cannot escape the necessity of preparing for war. This is the inescapable contradiction which vitiates the whole conception of the Communist society, and which compels it, in spite of any opportunist professions of peacefulness, to strive to universalise itself by war.⁴ The Communist society must go on preparing for war, and the compulsion can cease only when it has finally triumphed over the outer world. Then, of course, theoretically, the Communist society would cease to be a slave-society; it would not need to prepare for war, nor would it need to inculcate the perpetual menace of war to provide the social incentive or the cement of social cohesion. Beautiful theory! In fact, the war which had previously been international would, by the triumph of world-communism, become domestic and endemic. Preparation for international war would merely be replaced by preparation for domestic repression. The slave-society cannot, by universalizing itself, become other than the slave-society on a titanic scale. The peace of world-communism is a vicious phantasy of the same order as the ultimate "pacifism" of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

But the only counter to this demonic urge, which has now swollen to mass-dimensions, to universalise the new slave-society, is the unfanatical determination to universalise the free society. That cannot be done directly. Whereas Communism can, without contradiction, impose itself by main force upon its neighbour-nations, the free society can do no such thing. Its efforts to do so inevitably take the false and vicious form of attempting to impose Capitalism. The free society can only be universalised when the effort to do so takes the form of the effort to abolish war: which is the gangrene of the free society. Unless war is abolished, the free society must relinquish its freedom. In seeking to abolish war, in determining the necessary political conditions and institutions by which war can be abolished, in accepting the obligations which these conditions and institutions impose, the free society discovers the means to universalise itself without ambiguity.

This, as we have seen, involves the establishment of a supra-national authority possessing the effective power

not merely to prevent war, but also to replace by positive justice the rough "justice" hitherto provided by war. This, in turn, requires not, as is often said, the surrender or abolition of national sovereignty, but the surrender by all nations of that part of national sovereignty which consists in the right to make war. That certainly involves the new obligation of obedience to the decisions of a supranational judicial authority, since the surrender of the right to make war must create a vacuum of authority: an impossible condition of international paralysis. But this judicial authority cannot be conceived as a single and narrowly legal body. Its work would have to be done by different institutions: a supreme council, or parliament, to reach agreed and creative solutions of rival claims, a judiciary to interpret its decisions, and a quasi-autonomous body, such as the new Atomic Authority, which would significantly combine decisive punitive power with the duty of distributing the new physical energy equitably among the nations. There is, indeed, no escape from the necessity, which is inherent in the determined effort to abolish war, of establishing a new source of justice, and a new kind of justice. To seek to define this in advance would be to deny the nature of the free society: but obviously the new institutions would seek much the same kind of compromise, or synthesis, between prescriptive and ideal claims as is sought in the domestic free society.

For it is quite clear that, in seeking to abolish war, and in creating the institutions necessary to that sole end, we shall have created a free society of the nations, which, like the domestic free society, moves into the future without internal violence, and synthesizes its inward tensions. That, of course, is not the same as to universalize the free society, because it is conceivable, and indeed probable, that some of the member nations may not be free societies themselves. But it appears inevitable that they should begin to change in that direction. Not only would the pressure of the genuine, or induced, fear of war cease to be available as a justification for extreme compulsion; but the economic necessity of preparation for war being removed, the productive energies of the country would be wholly

devoted to improving the conditions of life : therefore, the discontent which requires to be repressed would rapidly diminish. Furthermore, there would be no ideology to justify dictatorship and the police-state, as the Communist ideology does, by presupposing the inevitability of war. That the class struggle (whose dynamic reality no reasonable man denies) does not involve civil war is demonstrated by the mere existence of the free societies ; that it does not involve international war will be demonstrated by the existence of the free society of nations. All that is false, vicious, and deadly in the Communist ideology will be annihilated by the concrete facts : whereas at the present time, it creates its own justification. It is not the facts of the human situation which create the probability that Soviet Russia will be encircled, but the policy of Soviet Russia ; just as it is not the facts of the human situation which have turned Soviet Russia into a stream-lined police-state, but the policy of its rulers. They themselves create the necessities which they obey. With the establishment of the free society of nations the possibility of continuing that sinister and paranoid process will disappear.⁵

But, alas, it is for these very reasons that we must anticipate a profound reluctance on the part of Soviet Russia to participate in a common determination to abolish war, and consequently to establish the free society of nations. Whereas the nations of the outer world, having experienced the futility of seeking to avoid war, are approaching the determination to abolish it and to pay the price of doing so, Soviet Russia seeks merely and solely to avoid war until such time as she is stronger in military power. I will not take upon myself to say that the rulers of Soviet Russia have, for their conscious final purpose, as Hitler had, the military conquest of the world ; but I think it is indubitable that they do contemplate a triumphant " defence " of Communism in a world-war with Capitalism which they believe to be inevitable. There is, certainly, a nuance of moral difference between this perspective and Hitler's ; but no difference at all in its consequences for the world, in the atomic age. The possibility of practical distinction between a war of offence and a war of defence has

vanished. To seek to be invincible in a war of defence involves trying to take possession of the world in order to achieve security. Therefore, in spite of the nuance of moral difference between the leaders of Soviet Russia and Hitler, Soviet Russia, by reason of her leaders' belief in the ultimate inevitability of war, is bound to provoke the same reaction from the world as Nazi Germany.* A common determination in the outer world to abolish war strikes direct at the cradal foundations of Soviet Russia. From the Soviet point of view it is an impossibility; and to believe that it is possible is, in Soviet Russia, a heresy.

This clash of conviction is a profoundly serious thing—the more serious because the conviction in the outer world that it is possible, because it is necessary, to abolish war is still vague and in process of formation. The Baruch proposals, though they represent the official policy of the United States, have implications that are probably in advance of anything the public mind of the United States is consciously prepared for. Thus arises the very real danger that the public mind of the United States, when its unformed aspiration is confronted by a radical and quasi-religious opposition from Russia, expressed in continuous evasion of the issue, may react into primitive hostility to Russia: the state of mind and policy which is called “getting tough with Russia.”⁶

That is natural; but it is dangerous, and (I believe) even fatal to human progress. It would be entirely disastrous if the outer world slipped into a war with Russia in the familiar condition of moral ambiguity. It is very necessary that the outer world should “get tough with Russia,” but it is still more necessary that it should get tough with Russia only over the right things—the issues which are of crucial importance to the salvation of the free societies. For the United States to become involved in war with Russia over some mere question of power-politics, such as the struggle for the dominant influence in China, would perplex the moral conscience of the world. Who is to judge between the justice of the claims of the Kuomintang and those of Yennan? If a war must be fought, for God's sake let it be fought on an issue which will unite the outer

world and not divide it, and will divide Russia from her rulers and not unite them. There is only one such issue. It is whether war shall, or shall not be abolished, as the sole means of determining disputes in which "the vital interests" of great powers are concerned; it is whether there shall, or shall not, be established an authority with the right and the power to determine these disputes, and the right and the power to ensure that its decisions are obeyed. There can be only one such authority—that is, the free society of nations.

Will Soviet Russia consent, or will she not, to the establishment of the free society of nations? That is the crucial issue in the world to-day. If Soviet Russia consents, then the last war has been fought already. If Soviet Russia refuses, then one more war is necessary to compel her to come in. But if another war is fought on any other issue than this, then civilization and the free society are doomed; Capitalism, Communism, Socialism, Democracy—all are involved in a common doom. For I hold it as certain that humanity cannot endure a war fought to the point of utter exhaustion, with no clear and universal moral purpose to sustain it. A barren conflict of power, fought, as such a conflict must be fought, to the bitter and insane end of "unconditional surrender," with all the weapons of mass-destruction that now exist, means such massive moral and material degradation of the human race that civilization cannot survive.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERIL OF PACIFISM •

To get the issue clear, and to keep the issue clear, is the paramount duty of all the statesmen of the outer world to-day, and of all the "clerks" of the West: because it is only by doing so, that we have a real chance of abolishing war without being compelled to fight another. I will try, at the risk of repetition, to make this plain.

I will assume that I have sufficiently demonstrated the necessity of a common determination in the outer world—and above all in the United States and Great Britain—not to flinch from war in order to abolish war. Men should flinch from war for any other purpose, but from war for this purpose they must not flinch. Those words are not strong enough. It is imperative that the United States and Britain shall be determined not to be drawn into war for any other purpose and on any other issue; but that they shall be absolutely determined to wage war, if need be, on this issue.

Once those two complementary principles are clearly determined, clarity immediately descends on the confusion of the contemporary power-struggle. The main lines of necessary policy become plain. The problems that arise on every hand, as between the United States and Britain on the one hand and Russia on the other, must be referred to the judgment of the authority that must be created in order to abolish war.

But, it will be said, this is fantastic. The authority does not exist, and the whole problem is how to bring it into being.

I am not speaking of an actual reference to such an authority. I am speaking of a mental reference to it, primarily on the part of the statesmen of the United States and Britain, in order that their policy may be clarified in their own minds. But there should be an actual reference

also. The statesmen of the United States and Britain should say openly to the statesmen of Russia and to all the world, before the discussion of any thorny problem, that they desire that this problem should be referred to a supranational authority which has the mandate and the power to abolish war. They should say plainly, on every occasion, that the present Security Council of the United Nations will not do, because it does not possess the mandate and cannot possess the power, while the veto-power exists : in other words, because its members reserve the right to go to war, rather than submit to the decision of the majority. This must be hammered home, again and again, till it becomes the inevitable preliminary and ideological background to every political discussion.

More important still is that the issue of abolishing war shall be forced immediately into the foreground, by the United States and Britain making it publicly known that, although they are prepared to go to any lengths to avoid war on any other issue, they have come to a common determination to go to war with any nation which finally refuses to enter a free society of nations for the purpose of abolishing war. They should convoke the existing Security Council to make this decision known, and serve it with what would be in effect an ultimatum : that if it did not within a limited time reconstitute itself into an authority for abolishing war, the United States and Britain would withdraw from it and form a new body for the purpose.

No matter how repugnant it may seem to those illusionists who entertain the hope of friendly agreement with Russia, the constant effort of American and British policy must be to achieve the moral isolation of Russia—on this issue *only*. The aim is to make it evident to the whole world, and above all to the Russian people themselves, that Russia alone is opposing the abolition of war. An enormous confusion prevails over this simple fact. Because Russia desperately desires to avoid war, it is quite commonly believed that she also desires to abolish war. This, I am convinced, is completely untrue, *at present*. The truth, I am convinced, is that while the rulers of Russia do desperately desire to avoid war, they still more desperately desire to avoid

abolishing war. To avoid war, for the time being, is to strengthen their régime; to abolish war is to weaken it, and eventually compel it to a revolutionary change in the direction of the free society.

The duty of the statesmen of the outer world is therefore clear. It is, first, to make this fundamental equivocation of the Russian leaders obvious to the whole world; and, second, to take full advantage of the perilous situation in which the Russian leaders have placed themselves. In order to do both these things, it is necessary that the leading statesmen of the outer world should have fully made up their minds that they will not allow Russia to avoid war, except at the price of agreeing—in deed, not words only—to abolish war. Once they have come to that decision, they are in a position to call the bluff of the Soviet leaders.

In other words, the one main object of British and American policy, beside which all others are insignificant, is to use the Soviet leaders' desperate desire to avoid war to compel them to do the thing which they even more desperately desire to avoid, namely, to be involved in and committed to the creation of an authority which has the effective power to abolish war.

This may be impossible, without actual war. It may be that the disintegration of their own power, and the evolution of Russia towards a free society, is a prospect so hateful to the Soviet rulers that they will prefer to accept the challenge of war. But it is extremely doubtful whether they could, in spite of all the enormous repressive powers of their police-state, retain sufficient authority to carry the Russian people into war in such a situation, provided the statesmen of the outer world used every possible means to bring home to the Russian people the truth: that their leaders were determined to drive them into a new world-war rather than allow them to participate in the common effort of humanity to abolish war. However great the propaganda skill of the Soviet leaders, however rigid their iron control of public opinion, however elaborate their measures for preventing the truth from penetrating into Russia from the outer world, I think it is probable that enough of the truth would percolate to make

it impossible for the Soviet leaders to drive the Russian people into war in so inhuman a cause. The chances are great indeed that the Russian leaders would be compelled to submit.

But so long as they have reason to believe that they can avoid war without being compelled to participate in the effective abolition of war, so long will they retain and consolidate their power over the Russian people. It is on their success in achieving these two objects at the same time—avoiding war, and avoiding the abolition of war, that the continuance of their rule depends. It is on our success in preventing them from achieving these two objects that the hope of saving civilisation and the free society depends.

It is a delusion to imagine that there is any possibility of world-peace through friendly agreement between the present rulers of Soviet Russia (at least, while they are in their present mind) and the outer world. It is a delusion to imagine that a régime such as the Russian is compatible with world-peace. And those delusions can only be cherished by those who believe that world-peace can be secured by avoiding war. That is the most terrible fallacy of our times. The price we paid for entertaining it was all the hideous destruction of the second world-war. By avoiding war with Nazi Germany, we were compelled to fight Germany to "unconditional surrender." Now the same fearful fallacy rears its head again. And, if we once more indulge in the belief that by avoiding war with Russia we secure peace, we shall come to the same disastrous end.

The only way to extricate our minds from this maze of illusion and delusion is to put the first thing first: to decide that the one thing needful, at this point in the history of man, is to abolish war. Then to decide that we are prepared to pay the full price for that self-deliverance of humanity, even though the price be war. These two things decided, then the road is clear: and the chances are overwhelmingly great that war will, in fact, be abolished without our having to pay the dreadful price of war. But once we begin to waver, to be less than absolutely resolved to pay that price, if need be, then we shall fail to abolish

war. And to fail to abolish war, at this crucial moment of human destiny, is to condemn civilization to destruction.

It is an instance, on a large scale, of the profound moral and spiritual truth that "he that will lose his life, the same shall save it." That truth was uttered of individuals, not nations. But we have reached a point in human development when the reality of the individual person no longer resides in himself, but has mainly shifted to the nation-state. That paradox is hard to understand, or perhaps easier to understand than to make actual to ourselves. It is the revolutionary truth which is at the basis of Karl Marx's philosophy: that "the socialised man"—the man whose essence is to be sought in the social organization to which he belongs, as Marx proclaimed in his epoch-making "Theses on Feuerbach"—is the contemporary reality. And Marxism is right in maintaining, and the critics of Marxism are wrong in denying, that the individual person of traditional religious and liberal-political thinking, is largely an illusion. But Marxism is wrong in believing that the deep religious truths concerning the regeneration of the individual person are therefore obsolete. They are just as true as they were; but they have to be largely transferred from the individual person to the nation-state.

You prove too much, it may be said. If we transfer the truth: "He that will lose his life, the same shall save it" from the individual to the nation-state, does it not become, in the context of this discussion, an injunction to unilateral disarmament? No doubt, it could become that, but, if it does become that, the consequence is that those who obey the injunction become a tiny sect of odd people advocating a policy to which they know the nation will give no heed. That is to say, they become morally separated from the society to which they belong: they are condemned to impotence and insignificance.

The profound religious truths which were originally addressed to the individual person, who is a mere shadow of his former self, can be transferred to the new "socialized man" only on one condition: that they are acceptable to society as a whole. What is outside the range of possible action by society as a whole, is outside the range of

"socialized man" Will he, nil he, the fragment of the "socialized man," which each one of us is to-day, does what society as a whole does. He may, as an individual think what he pleases; he may say, by no means all that he pleases, but a good deal that is definitely displeasing to society as a whole; but in the realm of action, he is compelled to *do* what society as a whole does. For example, I might—and in fact did—bitterly and publicly oppose the policy of "unconditional surrender" when it was officially proclaimed to Germany; nevertheless, in the realm of action I was compelled to follow that policy. In all the vast complex of actions which was necessary in order that the nation-state should implement that policy, I participated. A large portion of what I earned was devoted to the implementation of that policy: nearly everything that I bought—my tobacco, my petrol, my watch, my fountain-pen, elicited a further contribution from me towards the bombs and the aeroplanes which carried that policy into act. Ten shillings in every pound of the profits of the journal in which I denounced that policy were automatically taken to implement it. And I could have prevented this paradoxical perversion of my purposes as an individual person only by refusing to pay taxes, by refusing to buy anything that was taxed, by refusing to grow corn and sugar beet to feed the nation which, like me, co-operated with this policy. I should have had to spend my time permanently in prison—to allow my children to starve, or live, if they could, upon charity, while I took up my abode as a non-paying guest in one of His Majesty's hostels. That conclusion would have been insensate. In order to preserve the integrity of my conscience as an individual person in regard to the state-policy of "unconditional surrender" I should have had to outrage my conscience as an individual person by abandoning my family.

There is a simple proof, from recent experience, that the individual person in the modern nation-state is largely an illusion. He is, considered as an individual, a self-contradictory being, who, no matter how hard he tries, cannot *act* as an individual. If he does try, his moral being is cloven in twain, and he acts, not as an integral individual

person, but with one half of him outraging the other half. Those people who imagine they act as individuals do so only because they have not acquired true self-knowledge : they deceive themselves through ignorance.

In order that the individual may become integrated and real, he must will acts which are within the range of possible action by society as a whole. Naturally, there will be deep differences of opinion as to what acts are within the range of possible action by society. But it is the duty of the individual to bring to bear upon the question the most disinterested and selfless thinking of which he is capable : and this is, above all, required of a member of a free society precisely because he is free to advocate that the society should act in ways in which it is most unlikely to act. Thus, a pacifist in a free society is perfectly free to advocate unilateral disarmament, and God forbid that the freedom should be taken from him. But he is also required to act as a fully responsible person, aware of his all but total immersion in the socialised humanity. If, in the light of that responsibility and that awareness, he can maintain with conviction not only that unilateral disarmament is well within the range of possible action by his society as a whole, but also that, if his society did act in this way, it would bring the world nearer to peace ; if he can also maintain that, in the event of his advocacy failing, the world will be no worse—then, I would admit that he is right to do so, and that his may be the correct translation from the individual to society of the injunction that we should lose our lives to save them.

But though I have known many pacifists, and some sincere ones, I have never met one who, possessing this degree of responsibility and awareness, advocated unilateral disarmament. Also, I have never heard or read it advocated with the singleness and intellectual honesty so revolutionary a doctrine requires. And, for my own part, though I often look upon the policy of unilateral disarmament with a kind of wistfulness, saying to myself : “ If only the nation—and I myself—had such utter trust in God as to be capable of that, the miracle might happen,” I put the thought resolutely away : first, because I am convinced that the nation

as a whole will not adopt it; second, because I am equally convinced that the open advocacy of a transcendent and impossible best for society may easily smooth the descent to an all too possible worst. Indeed, I see it happening already. Such advocates of unilateral disarmament as there are, advocate also the corrupt policy of "avoiding war." These are utterly different things, which have no connection with each other at all, and are indeed totally opposed to one another. The policy of unilateral disarmament is outside the range of possible action by Britain; the policy of avoiding war is only too much within its range. It has to be fought against, I believe, as the temptation of the Devil himself.

Among policies of peace which are within the range of possible action by Britain and America, there is a best and a worst. The worst is to avoid war; the best is to determine not to avoid war, if war be necessary to abolish war. The import of the religious injunction to the individual to lose his life to save it, if it is valid for socialised humanity, as I believe it is, must fall within the limits of possible action. That being granted, the reference is plain. To avoid war is the very opposite of losing one's life to save it: it is to save one's life to lose it. To be determined not to avoid war in the effort to abolish war is to obey the injunction indeed.

And if some gracious and simple souls should be offended by my application of an injunction of Christ to support the determination not to avoid war in order to abolish war, I must reply that, though I would not willingly offend them, truth compels. The sayings of Christ against war have a social context: they were directed against those who sought to realize the Kingdom of God by armed rebellion against the Roman power—the Jewish terrorists of his day. War, in the sense in which war is the expression of world-anarchy, as it is to-day, was no longer a possibility in the time of Jesus. It had been abolished by the Pax Romana, which Jesus supported. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." The tragedy of the modern world is that there is no Cæsar. The social context is for ever changing, and the literal application of religious truths

merely falsifies their truth. Imaginative interpretation is the only safeguard against this perversion.

Moreover, we moderns live in a world from which there is no escape "into the wilderness." We members of an industrialized but "free" society, are socialized beings in a sense unknown in Jesus' time, and quite unsuspected, save by the Jewish seer, Karl Marx, even a century ago. The highly, indeed, extravagantly, individualized Christianity which accompanied and stimulated the development of capitalism, and gave a new life to Christian pacifism, has been left high and dry by the new social integration which was unwittingly wrought by modern industrialism. The conscientious objector to war now operates under license from the State; and is simply allotted tasks in the war-machine which do not offend his peculiar idiosyncrasy. If the Christian pacifist is content with this position—whereby he claims "benefit of clergy" and the State allows it, on condition that he does his job as a "peaceful" cog in the war-machine, that is his affair. But the imaginative man will hardly be content with it. He will realize that there can be no peace, and no integral pacifism, until the day comes when the State is a war-machine no longer.

To ensure that the State ceases to be a war machine is the aim of the pacifist who tempers his conscience with imagination. Any other end is self-contradictory. That the State would cease to be a war-machine if society adopted unilateral disarmament is true enough; but since there is no possibility of society adopting it, if only because it offers no hope of security to the common man, the imaginative pacifist cannot pursue this end. By doing so, he will, in fact, help towards the perpetuation of war. By advocating the impossible ideal of universal disarmament to those who are incapable of comprehending what it involves, he supports the movement for partial disarmament, which means the perpetuation of war.

The imaginative pacifist, who pursues the end of doing all he can to ensure that the State is delivered from its present destiny of becoming more and more a war-machine, must therefore reject the advocacy of unilateral disarmament. Universal and complete disarmament is the only possible

way to save the State from becoming a war-machine, and to offer the common man the security for which, above all other things, he craves. That is possible only by the establishment of a world authority with the effective power to prevent war. The establishment of such authority is rejected, at present, by one nation only, which will, if it persists in this rejection, thereby condemn the other nations of the world to become war-machines.

Then comes the crucial question. Will the imaginative pacifist consent, or will he not, to the deliberate threat made by the nations which desire to establish a world-authority, to make war upon the nation which refuses, if it continues to refuse? I think he must consent; I think he must positively desire it. *Experto crede.*

Whether or not he ceases to be a "pacifist" is a quite irrelevant question. The question is whether he will, or will not, be an honest man. Where will he have the contradiction? In his unconsciousness, as it must increasingly be while, professing pacifism, he becomes more and more the state-licensed cog in the war-machine? In his thinking, as more and more mental ambiguity and dishonesty creeps into his advocacy of disarmament, plus security, plus avoiding war?

Is it not far better to have the contradiction in full consciousness, and to say: "I am no longer a pacifist, because I know that pacifism cannot secure peace for men or nations as they are, or are likely, for many, many years to become. I promised to renounce war. But the war which I renounced was the expression of universal anarchy. I did not intend to renounce the war that might be required for the creation of universal order. I maintained my renunciation of war throughout the war which was lately fought to exact from the enemy "unconditional surrender," for that is the direct and explicit negation of a universal order. If there is a universal order, whether established or intended, it implies conditions of surrender. But renunciation of the war which is the expression of anarchy, does not imply renunciation of the war which is the expression of order. And the pacifism which makes no distinction between the two generically different kinds of war has ceased to be a

human creed. It does not speak to the condition of contemporary man; it does not speak to what is best in him.

"Since I believe that the abolition of war is now the necessary condition of the survival of civilisation, by which I mean not the survival of the plutocratic civilization of capitalism, but the survival of the free society, wherein the necessary socialism is creatively reconciled with freedom of the human spirit; and since I know that in order to abolish war, and substitute for it the peaceful decisions or compromises of a supra-national authority, it may be necessary to fight one last war, which would be the first and only war of Order, I fully and freely determine that I will sanction and support this war."

I do not pretend that this has been an easy decision. It has been the outcome of a period of sustained, and I believe passionate and disinterested, thinking both on the nature of man in contemporary society and the nature of the human predicament. I have come to the conclusion that the clear decision to fight such a war, if it be necessary, is the noblest act of which the free society of which I am a member is capable. By coming to that decision, my country would become a nation to which I would be proud to belong; and if by word or deed I should do anything to confuse the issue, or to impede the formation of that clear resolve, I should be helping to weaken the good and strengthen the evil in the world.

I believe that if the free societies were to come to this clear decision—not to shrink from war in order to abolish war—it is much more than possible, indeed, highly probable, that they would not be called upon to fight the war which they were prepared to fight. "The readiness is all," or it might well be all. In that case, humanity would be spared and would deserve to be spared the fearful ordeal of a war for Order and Freedom. The cause of Order and Freedom would be won.

But if the free societies hesitate and fail to commit themselves, quickly and publicly, to the waging of this war, then I believe that the cause of Order and Freedom may be lost for ever. For wars of sheer power will inevitably follow, and the freedom of the free societies will be in-

creasingly destroyed by the mere necessities of preparation for post-atomic war. They will cease to be capable of a free decision to fight for Order and Freedom. They will hand themselves over to the tyranny of a blind automatism of destruction.

The decision to fight even the necessary war for Order and Freedom is a solemn and dreadful thing.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream :
The Genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council ; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

Nothing less will be undergone by the imaginative man who consciously commits himself to such a war. It is a grim sacrifice that is required of him ; but, having made it, he becomes a free soul. He has faced the contradiction, where alone it can be faced, in consciousness.

CHAPTER IX

COMMUNISM AND CONSCIENCE

It would be foolish to claim that in the free society all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. It is possible⁷ that in a fully collectivised society, controlled by an authoritarian ruling class, the standard of material living might be much higher than in a society in which major political decisions can only be taken by a Government which enjoys the support of a majority of the citizens, and is bound to allow the minority full freedom to express and make converts to its opinions, and to give way to it as soon as it commands the support of majority. Free men, as any employer knows, are not so economically convenient as men under entire compulsion.

What seems certain, however, is that a free society must be in the main a more contented society. Its lines of domestic policy will be more erratic than those of the planned authoritarian society; they will zig-zag about as the pendulum sways to this side or that of the practicable optimum. But if the policies of the Government are such that they arouse even a moderate dissatisfaction in more than half the people, that Government has to give place to one which will try to remedy those discontents. As nearly as seems humanly possible, in the free society, what the people actually want, as distinct from what rulers may think they ought to want, is secured to them. And in the process of achieving this simple, and perhaps not very exalted end, all manner of ancillary benefits accrue. There is freedom to think and to communicate one's thoughts, so that all the potential riches of human nature are at least available for the enrichment of society.

The free society is even free to decide, as possibly it will if it rises to the responsibility of ensuring its own survival, that the unceasing pursuit of a higher standard of material living is not a worthy end for any society. It may discover

that the pursuit of this end is, in the long run, self-contradictory. Indeed, it already seems fairly evident that it is. As men have advanced towards socialism, lured on mainly by the belief that they would have less work to do, they have discovered that this particular Elysium recedes. In Communist Russia, in semi-socialist England, in politically amorphous France, the universal cry is heard from the Government to the workers: "Work harder!" and the real, as opposed to the apparent, standard of living definitely declines.

That, it will be said, is an accident; it is due to the ravages of war. But is war an accident? Is it fortuitous that, as the drive towards economic collectivism has gathered strength, so has increased the incidence, the extent, the costliness in human life and human achievement, of wars?

On the contrary, it seems fairly plain that modern wars and modern collectivism are causally connected. In the case of Russia, which is the scientifically pure example of collectivism, it is evident that internal war first against "bourgeois survivals," then against critics of the Communist state, and the preparation for external war are necessary manifestations or accompaniments of complete collectivism. In the case of Britain, it is plain that the exigencies of the second world-war gave an enormous impetus to collectivism. Whether or not, as the case of Russia suggests it is, war is necessary to collectivism, there is no doubt that collectivism is necessary to war.

The Communist theory is that wars will cease when Communism has spread itself over the world. It is possible that international wars would cease; but they would be replaced by internal wars. Possibly these would remain latent, and not be suffered to explode; but the apparatus of repression required would be enormous. And Communism would not spread over the whole world except after another world-war in which the free societies were vanquished.

There is no evidence at all that the complete collectivism of Communism can establish itself in any free society, so long as it remains free. Communists themselves are under

no illusion about that. The whole theory of Communism, and every example of its practice, depends upon the seizure of state-power by a minority which maintains itself in power by force. Even if it were to happen, as it might in France, that the Communists obtained power by a free majority vote, the expectation is that they would maintain themselves in power by force and abolish the internal freedom by which the minority is free to become the majority. It is of the essence of Communist doctrine that the party should seize, whether by main force or constitutional means, the machinery of state-power, and use it so as to prevent itself from being dislodged.

It is, no doubt, to labour the obvious—but the obvious is often missed or forgotten—to emphasize that this theory and practice of Communism is based on the assumption that a Communist régime is bound to be unpopular with, and resented by, a majority of the citizens of any society—at any rate for many years. The theory is that, in the long run, a majority of the people will come to like it, as they experience the great material benefits which it promises, from the increased productivity of the new economy and the equitable distribution of its products. But if, *per impossibile*, it should happen that they still did not like it, the dictatorial régime must be continued until they do. What happens when and if they do come to like it, is not so plain. It is at this point that the miracle promised by Marx begins, and “the State withers away.” Will the citizens become so enamoured of their controllers who, they will now see, have been their austere and disinterested benefactors all along, that they will beg of them to carry on the work? Or will they say: “Thank you, very much, for your past kindness, which we have now come to appreciate, because we have become capable of doing the job ourselves. We should like to get on with it, but not before passing a vote of thanks and handing you this token of our continued esteem and regard”; and will Stalin IV be presented with a clock and a pipe-rack, an atomic motor-car and a country bungalow, but not with a portrait?

It is difficult to imagine the consummation that is prophesied. It seems to be based on the thesis that the whole

of the habits of a society are determined by its methods of commodity-production. When, for a sufficient space of time, all production has been dictatorially managed for "the benefit of all," the moment will arrive when everybody will act spontaneously for the benefit of all. The best qualified citizens will, by the operation of a kind of automatic altruism, become the technical directors of the vast productive enterprise, which is society. So, conceivably, even now, a small group of communally-minded people might behave in a common enterprise, where the best man for every particular job was placed in it, as it were, by general acclamation. It is difficult to work, as I know to my cost, having tried it for four years on a farm; it demands human beings much more mature, and much more selfless, than are to be found even among communally-minded people. I have no hesitation in saying that it requires people who have undergone some kind of spiritual revolution. That such a spiritual revolution should be produced throughout the whole of a huge society, by the process of compelling it over a period of years to work according to plan, is to me quite nonsensical. Men would have to be born again and born different.

That is, of course, really what Marxism promises: that men shall be born again, regenerated through automatic process. The methods of commodity production will be changed and, as a direct consequence, a new race of human beings will be engendered—co-operative, disinterested, seeking their individual happiness only in the service of the whole of society. But during the period while this rebirth is being prepared—the period of gestation of the New Jerusalem—unregenerate humanity must be submitted to iron discipline, while it learns the motions required by the new economy of production. The conception, if it ever was clearly conceived in Marx's mind, appears to be analogous to that of the fierce and detailed discipline of the Brigade of Guards, which is continued until the reflexes are automatic. Hence, no doubt, the immense vogue of Pavlov, and his conditioned reflexes, in the Soviet Union. The dictatorship of the proletariat is established in order to condition the reflexes of the mass-

society. One day the reflexes of the masses will need no more conditioning by authority; they will be fully established. Then the millennium will have arrived.

The trouble is that nobody will know when it has arrived. The intricate web of "conditioning" authorities will be just as necessary after as before the millennium. They will be an integral part of the body politic. Even if the dictators, big and little, all suddenly retired, they would have to be replaced immediately by understudies. The "conditioning" of the perfected Communist society thus consists in conditioning it to produce its own conditioners; which it already does. The Communist millennium will have arrived when everybody takes for granted the functioning of the Communist State. Since everybody who does not already comes in for the attentions of the N.K.V.D. we must suppose that the Communist millennium is here already, except for the final improvement, which will be when the N.K.V.D. finds that it has no more work to do.

Another improvement is possible. This will, perhaps, be achieved when Communism has spread over the whole world, and in consequence there are no more wars. Then the universal Communist society will no longer be compelled to divert its production into preparation for war. Then, the standard of living will increase every year; for the whole productive economy of the world will be geared to consumer-production and the production of capital goods for more consumer-production. Then, whatever dissatisfactions with the system now exist, will be automatically removed, because everybody's material wants will be fulfilled. This will, in a short space of time, enable the world-wide N.K.V.D., which will be necessary just at the beginning till things have settled down in the new Communist territories, to transform itself into a universal dispensary of benevolence. The world will be one vast Russia, without shortages. Everybody will like it, for how can anybody not like a society in which there are no shortages?

But what will entitle the average man to his share in the ever-increasing supply of goods? At this point we must

meditate Marx's famous slogan: "From each according to his capacity: to each according to his needs." I think there can be no doubt that Marx imagined, whether clearly or vaguely, a society of universal benevolence: a Theléma, in which everybody did as he liked. But he would only like to do what benefited society as a whole. This, indeed, was the regeneration he seems to have anticipated. But—here is the catch—though everybody would do as he liked, it would not be the individual person who did as he liked, but the new and completely socialized being.^a In other words, society as a whole would do what it liked, and the ex-individual would respond by virtue of a new co-consciousness (to use a phrase of Mr. Gerald Heard's) to the massive compulsions of society. But he would not experience these as compulsions, any more than the bee in the hive experiences the urge to which it responds in foraging, in storing, or in swarming, as a compulsion on the individual bee. The massive compulsions would come to the member of the mature and completed Communist society as an overwhelming impulse to work and produce more commodities. How this would be combined with an equally overwhelming and equally necessary impulse to consume them is not clear. Will the problem be solved by the emergence of a specialised race of consumers, like the drones in the bee-society?

The more one meditates upon this consummation of the Communist society, the more one comes to realise that it is, as an ideal, self-contradictory: for it is as individuals that men, however mistakenly, desire to increase their consumption of material goods, and it is the most highly individualistic societies which, in fact, have increased their production to the already fantastic pitch that has been reached in U.S.A. Yet, in order to achieve a production of material goods far surpassing that of U.S.A., men are required completely to de-individualise themselves, and become, far more than they are already, mere adjuncts of the machines which exist to produce goods for them. The vision is a psychological and spiritual monstrosity. Moreover, when it is shorn of its aura of vague benevolence, it reduces itself to the system which is already

in operation in Russia. For when we consider society as an organism, which is what Marxism does, the dictatorial elements are just as organic to the whole as any others. The fable of Menenius applies exactly; because an organic society is a hierarchical society. The Communist Party is the nervous system of Russia, the Politburo the brain. Why trouble—as Coriolanus pertinently asked—to ask the belly or the rest of the members for their “voices”? In the Marxist sense, Soviet Russia today is Thelema. Everyone already does what he likes. That he does not know that he is doing what he likes is simply due to the persistence in him of vestigial bourgeois prejudices; his incomplete awareness of the extent to which he is dissolved in the social reality.

To us who are outside the charmed circle, and perhaps to many who are within it, the system looks like a very formidable tyranny. But that is—from the Soviet point of view—merely the inevitable distortion produced by the fact that we *are* outside it. We are not consubstantial with the new Communist society. If we were, we should understand that what seems to us like the apparatus of tyranny is merely the functional arrangement necessary to the working of the new social organism.

This is not intended ironically. There is good reason to suppose that some such revolutionary change of perspective does occur in those who live (or survive) within the charmed circle. Perhaps Arthur Koestler has come nearest to conveying it in the figure of Rubashov in “Darkness at Noon.” And certainly the reality of some such process of de-individualisation would explain, far better than any other suggestion, the extraordinary demeanour of the old Bolsheviks in the purge-trials of 1937. They were, as indeed Koestler depicts them in Rubashov, men who, in pursuit of an ideal created by the individualised consciousness, had submitted themselves—and innumerable others—to a process of de-individualisation. They had proclaimed the moral autonomy of the functional and organic Communist society, and done much to create it. When it proceeded to liquidate them as traitors and saboteurs, for daring to uphold a minority opinion, how

could they say that the autonomous society was wrong? Whatever it did was necessarily right: or rather right and wrong had no meaning any more. There was no criterion, no court of appeal, to which they could refer with any sense of inward conviction. They could not do other than acquiesce in their own extermination.

Such is the logical end of those who connive at the destruction or disintegration of the free society. Unwittingly but enthusiastically, they hand themselves over to a social organism which annihilates conscience. That this is empirically true is evident in the appalling public behaviour of the Communist parties outside Russia: in their truly fearsome lack of principle, in their complete untrustworthiness in all relations with those who, consciously or unconsciously, maintain the moral standards of the free society; and equally in their extraordinary reliability in their relations to their own party, or to the Kremlin, which is the same thing. These Communist parties outside Russia are consubstantial with the new social organism of Soviet Russia. They are a terrible menace to the free societies, for they are unremittingly at work to annihilate, in those whom they proselytize, the one element that keeps the free societies alive—namely, conscience.

It is on the reality of, and the respect for conscience, that the life of the free societies depends. The tolerance which is the essential condition of its working is the behaviour which expresses the recognition of the reality of, and the respect for, conscience. On the large political scale this is expressed in the moral law which enjoins that the political majority must grant the minority full freedom to become the majority and so displace itself as the government. That this obligation is felt as a moral law in the free society is, when soberly considered, the most astonishing political achievement of man. Because it is universally recognised within the free society, and has become a habit of mind, we take it too easily for granted; and are insufficiently alert to the menace of doctrines which threaten it.

Hence has arisen the culpable levity with which a section of the British Labour movement has toyed with the idea of applying revolutionary violence at home, and has become

oblivious of the moral gulf which separates the free society from Communist Russia. This section of the Labour movement habitually argues that Communist Russia is simply a new socialist nation-state whose internal organisation is no concern of ours—except that we ought to admire and emulate it more than we do—and that Britain should be quite neutral in sympathy as between Soviet Russia and U.S.A., because, if Britain and U.S.A. have political democracy in common, their respective socialism and capitalism set them at odds. Britain's socialism should make her more friendly to Soviet Russia, than her democracy makes her friendly to U.S.A.

This attitude of mind is based on a dangerous moral confusion, and those who adopt it have already gone far towards the obliteration of conscience in themselves. The attitude would be correct enough if there were in existence a free society of nations; and in the better minds which embrace it, it probably is an unconscious survival of the liberal mentality of the 19th century, which assumed that a free society of nations was effectively in existence. It does not exist; and the crucial question of our time is whether the free societies have the strength of purpose to create it. In such a free society of nations the internal organisation of its member nations would be, in the short run, a matter of indifference: though not in the long run. But in the existing anarchy of nations, it is a matter not of indifference, but of quite cardinal importance to a free society whether a great power is organised as a free society or not, because the free societies are based on the recognition of a moral law that overrides the necessities of state. If they did not recognise this moral law, they could not be free societies. It is because they recognise this moral law that they are capable of working in harmonious alliance: they can understand one another, and trust one another, because they respect a common law which overrides "necessity of state."

In Soviet Russia the free societies are confronted with a morally autonomous society, which recognises no law beyond its own necessities. This is true, both of its domestic relations to its own citizens and its foreign relations to outside nations. It is, indeed, a datum. To fail to

recognize the dangerous significance of this datum, though it is very natural, because a morally autonomous society is to the Englishman almost an inconceivable thing, is to betray the free society at this moral crisis in human history. And it is the prevalence of this moral blindness among the "intellectuals" of Britain, the responsible "clerks" of a highly developed free society, which arouses the misgiving that the free society in Britain may, after all, be far gone in moral corruption and spiritual decay; because it is ceasing to be aware of its own nature, and of the reality and inestimable value of that loyalty to the moral law, supreme over the state, without which the free society cannot live.

Does this blindness come from the security of habit, or a positive corruption? It cannot be definitely affirmed. But it seems more probable that it is the latter; because the same people who maintain that Britain should be neutral in its sympathies between U.S.A. and Soviet Russia were unanimous and unsparing in their detestation of Nazi Germany: ostensibly at least, and perhaps really, on the ground that it was a morally autonomous society. In that particular case, they appear to have been well aware of the menace offered by the morally autonomous society to the free society, based on universal moral law, but when they are confronted by the morally autonomous society of Soviet Russia, they maintain that it offers no threat to the free society, and that it has quite as great a claim on the friendship of the free society of Britain as the cognate free society of U.S.A. And these people have their counterparts in U.S.A. itself, like Mr. Wallace and his followers, who maintain that Soviet Russia has, if anything, a rather greater claim on the friendship of the free society of U.S.A. than the cognate free society of Britain.

Now this fundamental contradiction, as it must appear to the conscious defender of the free society, can be explained only in two ways. Either we must suppose that its proponents believe that the bond between the free societies which arises from their common belief that there is a moral law superior to the law of the State, to which the law and actions of the State must conform, is altogether less real and compulsive than the bond which unites with

the Communist society of Russia those in the free societies who advocate socialism as against capitalism. Or we must suppose that they believe that, by denying and not acting in accord with their community of belief, the free societies can avoid war with Soviet Russia and ultimately establish a peaceful and trustful relation with her. The first of these suppositions applies rather more to the British repudiators of the community of the free societies; the latter to the American, for Mr. Wallace claims to be a supporter of American capitalism. But the two beliefs are mixed together.

Let us examine them. According to the first, the community between the socialists of a free society and the Communists of Russia is, and ought to be, more compulsive than the community between the free societies. Why? Because they have the same economic objectives? But they have not. The objective of "socialism in a free society" is generically and totally different from that of Communism in a totalitarian society. Of course, the objective of some socialists in a free society may not be "socialism in a free society" at all, but Communism in a totalitarian society: in which case they are deceiving themselves and others by not calling themselves Communists. But there is far more in common between the objectives, "capitalism in a free society" and "socialism in a free society," than there is between the objectives, "socialism in a free society" and "Communism in a totalitarian society." The real cause of the mental and moral confusion in those socialists who, tacitly or explicitly, deny this, is that they have not thought out what their objective really is. They avoid making clear to themselves the vital distinction between "socialism in a free society" and "Communism in a totalitarian society" by thinking of their objective simply as socialism. But it is of supreme importance to be clear whether by this you mean socialism as far as it is practicable within a free society, and socialism at all costs. In the former case, you remain a loyal member of the free society, in the latter case you have become a traitor to it.

According to the second supposition, the belief is that

by denying and not acting in accord with their community of belief, the free societies can avoid war with Soviet Russia and ultimately establish a peaceful and trustful relation with her. The falsity of this belief has already been demonstrated at length in previous chapters. By avoiding war with Soviet Russia, instead of compelling Russia to join the free societies' in abolishing war, war of the most destructive kind is made, humanly speaking, inevitable. Moreover, the objective of a peaceful and trustful relation with Soviet Russia, so long as she remains a morally autonomous society, is demonstrably a mirage. A peaceful and trustful relation between States is manifestly possible only when they acknowledge some moral law that is superior to their own will, or their so-called necessities of state. This moral law, as between the nations, can now be formulated and defined only in one way, through the institution of a free society of nations, in which the decisions of the majority are binding upon the minority. Those who, tacitly or explicitly, maintain that a peaceful and trustful relation is possible between a free society which acknowledges a moral law superior to all "necessities of state," and a totalitarian society which does not, are traitors to the free society. They have ceased to understand, and to defend, the moral law on which the freedom of the free society depends.

This, I have no doubt, is the crucial issue of our time ; and it is ominous that so many members of the free society, who shrink from adhering to the Communist party, because they are genuinely shocked by its public behaviour, and are at least superficially and sentimentally opposed to the internal ruthlessness applied by the rulers of Soviet Russia, have nevertheless been guilty of "*il gran rifiuto*." Their activities within the body politic of the free societies are more dangerous, because more seductive and apparently more humane, than those of Communists professed. They unconsciously exploit the profound bias towards international peace which is inherent in the free societies, and do so the more effectively because they themselves subjectively experience this bias towards peace with a particular intensity. They may be, for the most part, good men ; but their behaviour is pernicious.

CHAPTER X

THE MORAL NIHILISM OF COMMUNISM

THE respect for conscience, we have argued, is fundamental to the freedom of the free society. The phrase, "respect for conscience," has acquired a peculiar and somewhat limited meaning in Britain where it is concurrently and most frequently applied to the recognised necessity of making legal provision for "conscientious objection"—to compulsory vaccination, or compulsory military service. This limitation, in itself, does no harm; because the recognition of "conscientious objection" as a right is an extreme but highly symbolic form of "respect for conscience"—one which has emerged into prominence as the activities of the state in the free society have become more comprehensive.

But the "respect for conscience" which is fundamental to the freedom of the free society is compatible with a refusal to afford more than a limited recognition to the right of "conscientious objection." Thus, in France, the right of "conscientious objection" to military service has never been legally recognised, and the citizen who refuses such service is punished by a severe sentence of imprisonment. Nevertheless, France is a free society. For the true criterion of the free society is whether its government is democratically elected, and whether there is freedom to criticise, to associate, and to organise an alternative government. This freedom may, or may not, be guaranteed by a written law. That is unimportant: for written laws and constitutional guarantees may be suspended. We need a guarantee of guarantees. What is necessary in order to secure the free society is the universal sense that freedom of speech and association, and freedom to organize an alternative government which can offer itself to the people's suffrage, must on no account be taken away or diminished: in other words, the universal sense that there is a moral law, superior to any ordinance of state, which commands tolera-

tion. This moral law would not be broken, but, indeed, more consistently applied, if citizens were forbidden to advocate the suppression of these freedoms and to associate for the purpose of suppressing them, or establishing a system of government—like the Communist or the Fascist—which would suppress them. It is not intolerance to refuse to tolerate the intolerant, as many believe. On the contrary, it is tolerance itself, fully conscious of its own essential nature and the indispensable conditions of its existence, and acting in accord with that consciousness.

The recognition that there is a moral law, superior to any ordinance of state, which commands that freedom of speech, of association, and freedom to organize an alternative government must be maintained, is the conscience that upholds the free society. It is the conscience that respects conscience. It is not bound to respect the "conscience" of those who have no respect for conscience; and I believe that at the present juncture it makes a serious mistake in doing so. This mistake is an inheritance from the days, now unhappily past, when the free societies were so secure that they could regard the advocates of organized intolerance as mere eccentrics. Those days are gone. Organized intolerance now has behind it a very powerful state, which commands the fanatical allegiance of disciplined bodies of men within the free societies themselves. In such a situation, to continue the easy-going insouciance which dismissed the handful of advocates of internal violence as amiable eccentrics, is a perilous anachronism. It is to caress the Trojan horse.

To those who think that it is a violation of the rights of conscience in a free society to forbid the dissemination of political doctrines which deny the rights of conscience, we must insist that freedom to disseminate such doctrines is not a right of conscience at all. It is impossible conscientiously to advocate such doctrines. Those who claim that they do are liars. The conscience to which they appeal is a false conscience.

If loose-thinking sentimentalists are shocked that anyone should take it upon himself to declare, categorically, that another man's conscience is false and bogus, the reply is

plain. Conscience is governed, and defined, by the law of its own being. It cannot be self-contradictory. The conscience that denies to others the rights of conscience is an absurdity. For conscience is not a subjective emotion, but the acknowledgement of a universal moral law: and on the acknowledgement and reality of this universal moral law the free societies depend. The Communist who is intellectually and morally convinced of the truth of the Marxist thesis that all social morality is completely determined by the methods of production, on the instant that he receives that conviction, ceases to possess a conscience. He may pretend to have one; he may even say that it is "a matter of conscience" with him to propagate the conviction and the doctrine to which he has succumbed: but, in that case, the word conscience is a mere noise, a word devoid of meaning. Conscience *is* the acknowledgement of a universal moral law; and conscience can have no existence in a person who denies, or advocates a doctrine which denies the reality of the universal moral law.

Hence, the extraordinary discipline of the Communists. When members of the free society confess, as they sometimes do, to admiration and envy of the discipline of the Communist party, they reveal their ignorance of the disquieting phenomenon which confronts them. They do not understand that the discipline of the Communists is what it is, because conscience has been annihilated in them. Since that condition is strange and unfamiliar to these members of the free society, a condition outside the range of their experience, they regard its manifestation in action as a finer form of a virtue with which they are familiar. Political discipline *is* a great virtue in the free society—a virtue which is achieved only by the exercise of self-restraint, imagination and "tendering the whole." It is the lack of political discipline which, more than anything else, endangers the existence of the free society to-day. But this is the discipline of conscience itself, which, by its own nature, can never have the outward and seeming perfection of the discipline that is based on the annihilation of conscience. The self-subordination of the individual to the moral law whose validity he recognises, perhaps after a considerable

mental and moral effort, is naturally a slower and more hesitant process than the instant and automatic obedience to an external command which is given by the man who has ceased to distinguish right and wrong, because he has embraced a doctrine which annihilates the distinction: a doctrine which declares that, since all morality is determined by the methods of material production, to change those methods of production is an end which is "beyond good and evil," and, if pursued, must be pursued with a complete indifference to good and evil. Such a creature, for he is no longer really a man, can do nothing but obey an external directive. There is nothing in himself from which a responsible choice of action can emanate. He is, mentally, morally and spiritually dead—an automaton. His discipline is as damnable as it is amazing.

But, it may be asked, may not a man become mentally and morally convinced by the thesis that all morality is completely determined by the methods of material production and yet refuse to submit himself to the discipline of the Communist party? Is he then bound to believe that to change those methods of production, by putting them under the control of society as a whole, is a self-evident good? And is he bound to believe that he can only pursue this good end effectively by joining or working in alliance with the Communist party?

We touch here on the mysteries of strict Marxism. Leaving aside for a moment the first of these three questions, it is obvious, in regard to the second, that a man may, conscientiously, believe that to change the methods of commodity-production by placing them under the control of society as a whole, is a good end. But what is meant by this will depend entirely upon what is meant by "society as a whole." Is it a free society, or is it some other kind of society? This is vitally important. For, if the continued existence of the free society is posited as the limiting condition to the ownership and control of the means and methods of production by society, it is obviously untrue that a man who believes that this is a good end "under this limiting condition (as all genuine democratic socialists do) has been converted to the thesis that all morality is deter-

mined by the methods of production. Quite the contrary. For such a man the moral law that requires the maintenance of the free society is manifestly absolute, and entirely exempt from determination or change by the methods of production. Of course, such a man, if he is rather muddle-headed, as many democratic socialists are, may sincerely believe that he believes that all morality is determined by the methods of commodity-production ; but that is a subjective fantasy of his. He does not really believe it.

We can now return to the first question. If a man, who is not muddle-headed, does become mentally and morally convinced that all morality is determined by the methods of production, he must necessarily hold that the continued existence of the free society is not an end that can be insisted on or striven for. It will survive or disappear as the methods of production change : if the change destroys the free society, it is the will of Allah, or the inherent necessity of the historical-materialist process, which, according to the Marxian thesis, is driving towards the ownership and control of the means and methods of production by "society as a whole." The reason why the man himself should identify himself with and consciously seek to further this automatic process, or how he does it, is not really clear on Marxist theory : but the obscurity on this point is, as it were, diffused by the thesis that the automatic process must take the form of seizure of political power by the proletariat, which, by definition, is the majority. Here the question arises : Does the proletariat "seize power" under the limiting condition of maintaining the free society ? If so, we are back to the fundamental position that morality is not determined by methods of production, but in the last resort morality determines them.

But if there is no such limiting condition a very important consequence follows. The seizure of power by the proletariat becomes the seizure of power by anybody—by any group of people who claim to represent the popular will, and have discipline enough to achieve the actual seizure of power. For how can the legitimate representation of the proletariat be determined except by the principles and rules of the free society ? Once the principles of the free society

have been repudiated, and the conscience which is their foundation annihilated, a world of endless relativism is entered. At no point in the subsequent process can a rule be introduced by which to decide whether those who claim to represent the proletariat really do so, or not: whether, in short, the proletariat is dictating, or being dictated to. Why should not Hitler have claimed to have seized power for the proletariat, and how could his claim have been disputed, if he had done so, except by the rules of the free society? The plebiscite by which a person or a group is confirmed in arbitrary power proves absolutely nothing as to the legitimacy of the representation of the proletariat or people by the new rulers. Thus, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is a contradiction in terms, for unless it is governed by the rules of the free society, it must become dictatorship to the proletariat. Unless the morality of the free society, which is outside and beyond the materialistic process of history, is introduced into that process it becomes a naked struggle for power between power groups which in no sense can be said to represent the people.

So that, in fact, the man who becomes convinced that morality is completely determined by the methods of production, must either at some point dismiss from his mind this evil fantasy, by reasserting the validity of the moral law, or he must be sucked into a vortex which culminates in some condition of affairs that may be described as the "dictatorship of the proletariat." But nobody will know, or can know, whether it is the proletariat that dictates, or how, or what the proletariat is. All that can be said is that the social organism, completely absolved from good and evil, will move on, no one knows whither; that there will be uncontrolled power somewhere at its centre, uncontrolled because there is no moral law by which it can be controlled; that there will be a constant, progressive and lawless accumulation of power, continually changing the methods of production for the accumulation of more power. This monstrous social organism will arise somewhere, like a solar system developing out of a nebula, and those who have consented to the annihilation of conscience in themselves will inevitably be attracted to it as it were by

a force of gravitation. They will join themselves to the aggregation of lawless power because it commands, because it tells them what to do, because the dictate of power must fill the vacuum when morality has been annihilated.

This new social organism is Communist Russia, which includes the Communist parties *in partibus infidelium*, for they are consubstantial with it; and there does exist a real necessity by which the man who embraces the Marxist theory as a true and complete explanation of history and of himself in the process of history must eventually be sucked into the vortex of the new Communist social organism. Man's moral nature, like physical nature, abhors a vacuum; and when he has explicitly denied the objectivity and reality of the moral law which is the basis of the free society, he is unable to distinguish between right and wrong. If, as in this case by hypothesis, his purposes are political, he has no criterion for political action which he can apply himself: he must seek an external authority, which offers itself to him as, by nature, beyond criticism. If it were, even theoretically, amenable to criticism, it would stimulate into activity the sense of right and wrong which has been annihilated in him.

Therefore, the political authority which the complete Marxist is compelled to seek is one which is infallible. If the dogma of the infallibility of the Communist leadership did not exist, it would have to be invented. The leadership could not conceivably be democratic—in the sense of the free society—for that would necessitate tolerance, and tolerance can only be based on the recognition of the objective moral law. Democratic Communist leadership is a contradiction in terms. It has, by necessity inherent in the premisses of Communist theory, to be infallible. How the infallible leadership is actually constituted is a minor matter (though an interesting subject for inquiry, if reliable data were available). It is sufficient to say that the struggle for supreme power within the new Communist social organism will necessarily produce the infallible leader. The position of infallibility is there to be filled; as it were, the sum of all the mental and moral vacua created in the millions of members of the Communist party and

"fellow-travellers" all over the world by the annihilation of conscience in themselves. *How* it is filled is a matter for curiosity merely: what is important to realise is that it *must* be filled. The force of spiritual necessity—if it can paradoxically be so described—or of psychological demand is overwhelming. And it must be remembered that whatever we may suspect in the way of sordid and cruel palace intrigues to fill the position of infallibility, can be neither sordid nor cruel from the point of view of the system in which they occur. That is, definitely and absolutely, beyond good and evil. There are no possible moral criteria in the struggle for power. Whoever triumphs, and by whatever means, is infallible.

No doubt there are striking analogies between the infallible autocracy developed by Communism in Russia and the Byzantine Empire, and the Czarist autocracy which was directly shaped by the Byzantine tradition; but it would be very superficial to imagine that some permanent trait in the Russian character is the chief cause of this truly astonishing phenomenon. The true cause is, indubitably, Marxism; but the villain of the piece is not Karl Marx. The historical materialism of Marx himself was neither rigorous nor, in the last analysis, atheistic. It was permeated with what Bertrand Russell has called "a cosmic optimism,"—a belief that the whole process of history is working towards the Good; and it was tempered also by a vague belief in the free society. The social revolution prophesied and desired by Marx was either a "peaceful and legal" revolution in the political free society, or a violent revolution which created a free society where it did not exist before.

For the violent twist given to the doctrines of Karl Marx an element in the Russian national character can be blamed. Marxism, refashioned by Lenin, is a radically different thing from the doctrine of Marx himself: it is well on the way to being an absolutist doctrine. There is no marginal freedom; the materialistic determinism is become rigid. And action becomes rigid and absolutist, as in the crucial dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, which might have horrified Karl Marx.

But even Lenin retained something of Marx's Europeanism: he always maintained that when one of the politically advanced nations of Western Europe adopted Communism, Russia would become a backward nation. Likewise, the Comintern, while Lenin lived, retained something of the spirit of a socialist international. But the momentum of the new social organism became massive when Stalin seized power. A complete severance was made from Western ideas; and the slogan "socialism in one country" marked the final phase of the development of Communism into a closed system. One may say, if one likes, that the spirit of Russia had triumphed over the spirit of Marxism: but it is much truer to say that one of the two contradictory elements in the Russian spirit—the tendencies to state-absolutism and to anarchy—had made Marxism into an absolute dogma.

Communism is what Russia has made of it; or what it has been transformed into by becoming the orthodoxy of a Russian government. It is only the more formidable. Not only has Russia transformed Marxism, but Marxism has transformed Russia; for perhaps the most striking thing about Russia was the vitality of its conscience—or its fits of conscience. Russia appeared to the European mind a strange and unstable combination of brutality and brotherhood, of riot and repentance. The brutality and the brotherhood have emerged again, more closely intertwined than before, indeed, ideologically and practically identical, but in a new dimension of callousness. Instead of being exiled, the critics of the new autocracy are exterminated. Holy Russia is now so holy that it is beyond good and evil. It, or its infallible leader, is the Demiurge himself. The Russian habit of fits of repentance has disappeared.

If the moral vacuum continues to invade the free societies, as it were breaking down the cells of their healthy tissue, by weakening and destroying conscience, and annihilating the sense of right and wrong in its members, the infallibility of the leadership of the new Communist social organism will inevitably fill the vacuum. As the free societies disintegrate, so the new social organism takes possession. If things happened in fact with the ideological clarity with

which one is compelled to represent them, every member of the free societies who suffers a blunting of his conscience, or a radical weakening of his sense of the objectivity of the moral law, would eventually become a member of the Communist party. But just as there are nearly 200 million Soviet citizens who are consubstantial with the new Communist social organ without being members of the Communist party, so there are millions of members of the free societies who, though they would shrink from membership of the party, and even feel a genuine repugnance at being associated with it, nevertheless effectively do its commands. For some of them—so obvious is their existence—a distinct and familiar name has been invented: they are “the fellow-travellers.” But there are many hundreds of thousands who are beyond this recognisable field of influence, and yet are dominated by it.

For instance, no-one whose conscience is still sound, and whose conviction that there is a right and wrong is undiminished, can read the most influential organ of the British “intellectual” classes—*The New Statesman*—for long without sensing a moral vacuum at the heart of it. It is morally prostrate before successful power as manifest in Russia. Occasionally, impelled by the twinges of conscience in its death-throes—“We have scotched the snake not killed it”—it tries to keep up an appearance of objectivity by publishing some vague expostulation against Russian brutality, indicating that Russia, if she were tactful, might consider the feelings of her British admirers a little more than she does. But, of course, a new giant power of this novel kind must needs be somewhat uncouth. Revolutions always are painful things: there is no making omelettes without breaking eggs. As Russia settles down she will become more polite. She will, indeed, soon be entering her Fabian phase. In the meantime all that matters is that we should not hurt her feelings by showing that she has wounded ours.

Such is the moral atmosphere that has emanated week by week from the pages of *The New Statesman* over a period of years. It was momentarily interrupted during the unfortunate episode of the Russo-German pact and the

partition of Poland ; but it was resumed, with enthusiasm, when Hitler invaded Russia. Russia had come to the rescue of the West ! It crystallised during the second half of 1946 into a definite political policy, of which the assistant-editor, Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, became the spokesman in Parliament. It is simple enough. Britain ought to be pro-Russian rather than pro-American, firstly, because Britain is Socialist and U.S.A. is capitalist ; secondly, because we must recognise the accomplished fact of Russian power in Eastern Europe, and, for our own safety's sake, we must seek to be on good terms with Russia rather than America. In any event, we must not allow ourselves to be dragged into a war against Russia by America. It seems, to the person who is ceasing to believe in the reality of the distinction between right and wrong, a very reasonable policy. After all, who would not like to be friends with Russia ? And is not peace always better than war ?

But the horror of this policy—and I confess it inspires horror in me—is that it is, in the last analysis, completely without principle. The only semblance of a principle which underlies it is that because Britain is a socialist country and Russia is also one, Britain should be more friendly to Russia than to the U.S.A. The falsity of this principle has already been demonstrated. I will waste no more time over it. I am quite as deeply opposed as Mr. Crossman to Britain being dragged into a war against Russia by the U.S.A. If there must be war with Russia, it must be on a matter of clear principle—the principle which underlies the very existence of the free societies. The cause of my horror is that neither Mr. Crossman, nor “The New Statesman” ever show the faintest awareness that such a principle exists, that it is of vital importance to the free societies, and that it divides them from Russia, which explicitly repudiates it, far more deeply than the tentative semi-socialism of Britain divides it from the capitalism of U.S.A.

The cause of this moral blindness is fairly plain. It lies in a fundamental equivocation concerning the nature of socialism : a systematic evasion, by many socialists within the free society, of the crucial question whether socialism

is, or is not, governed by the limiting condition of the free society. If it is, then anything which calls itself socialism, but is not so governed, has no claim whatever upon the admiration of the socialist whose socialism is so governed. Nor can he be neutral towards it. He must, if he retains his intellectual and moral integrity, oppose it with all his might. If he does not, he will inevitably be carried into the vortex of complete moral relativism. In that vortex Mr. Crossman and *The New Statesman* and the countless well-meaning and muddle-headed people whom they mislead are already caught. They are steadily working, however unconsciously, to disintegrate the free society; to atrophy the cells of conscience of which its living tissue is composed.

In large-scale political terms the issue is simple enough. The British socialist must not, on peril of losing his own moral integrity, deny that the bond which unites Britain to the United States ought to be much closer than any which may conceivably unite Britain with Russia. And the "ought" in this sentence is that of a genuine moral imperative. That is the issue in its very simplest form. But the principle on which it is based has equally important and equally imperative corollaries. The British socialist must not, on peril of losing his moral integrity, believe that there is any bond at all between Britain and Soviet Russia. He ought—again a moral imperative—to understand that no relation of trust and friendship between Britain and Soviet Russia is possible, or conceivable, until the leaders of Soviet Russia recognise the objectivity of the moral law. Until that time the best possible relation between any free society and Soviet Russia is one of hard concrete bargaining between morally hostile nations. To trust Russia to do things which she promises to do, unless at the time of performance it is to her advantage to do them, is fantastic. She may repay a loan if that is the condition of getting a further loan; but the moral obligation to do so, she will not and cannot recognize. What is right, in the Russian frame of reference, is what the infallible leadership of Russia decrees shall be done. To imagine that trustful relations are possible with a power of this character is to walk into the pit.

Further, this moral abyss between the free societies and Russia can only be bridged when and just in so far as her leaders come to acknowledge a moral law supreme over the interests of the Russian state, or world-Communism. These two things are consubstantial, and they represent a new and insidious social organism which seeks to spread itself over all the world and, in particular, to disintegrate the tissue of the free societies and undermine their moral resistance. The new social organism acts thus of necessity, because the free societies are the source whence respect for the moral law—so far as it exists in the modern world—is nourished; they provide a tribunal, a “forum of conscience” by which the new social organism is judged, and the new social organism fears judgment, because the right of judgment is its deadliest enemy. So long as the free societies exist Soviet Russia will never feel safe; its leaders will always be afraid of the contagion of the idea, manifested in the life of the free society, that there is a morality superior to the necessities of state. Neither can the free societies feel safe so long as Soviet Russia exists. But the free societies, by nature, have no leaders who can act upon this fear. This fear is not operative in action except in so far as the ordinary members of the free society feel it, and understand its nature.

In a vague and massive way they do feel it. However much equivocating socialists may insist that there is an ineradicable hostility between a socialist and a capitalist country, not one man in ten thousand in this country seriously believes that war between Britain and the United States is a possibility. The overwhelming majority of the people in this country know that it is a moral impossibility, though they may not know what a moral impossibility is. They feel it, though they cannot explain the feeling. If one were to tell them that it is because they believe that, in the last resort, both Britain and U.S.A. respect and will obey the moral law, they might be puzzled. But that is the reason why they feel safe with the United States: and there is no other reason at all. And the reason why an almost, but not quite, equally overwhelming majority of the British people do not feel safe with Russia, but feel that

war with Russia is a terrible but very real possibility, is that they do not believe Russia will respect the moral law.

These massive instincts of the British people are right ; and the true duty of the intellectuals to-day is to show them why they are right, and to help to refine their instinctive convictions into a rationally grounded faith, so that this faith may work in the shaping of a national policy which may be promulgated plainly and fearlessly to the world. But how many British intellectuals to-day are doing this plain duty ? How many of them, on the contrary, are engaged in undermining the massive instincts of their simpler fellow-citizens, confusing their sense of right and wrong, debilitating their capacity to trust in the morality of the free society, and weakening the national will to reassert the faith by which this country lives.

The new social organism of Soviet Russia, with its consubstantial Communist parties and fellow-travellers *in partibus*, may be likened to a vast parasitic ivy-trunk encircling the oak of the free society. The intellectuals who are at work to confuse the moral sense of the British people are the subtle tendrils of that parasite, by which it creeps steadily forward and higher. They are doing the devil's work in the name of truth and objectivity. Unless they they come to see the evil of their ways, to understand the nature of the steep slope on which they have set themselves, there is a great danger that the great oak of the free society of Britain will die, because the morality which is its life will have been eaten out of it.

CHAPTER XI

THE ORIGINS OF THE FREE SOCIETY

WE have said that the free society depends upon the recognition of the moral law, superior to any ordinance of state, which commands toleration, though not toleration of the intolerant. It behoves us to enquire more narrowly into the nature and status of this moral law, by reference to which we have vehemently rejected the doctrine that morality is determined by the methods of commodity-production. To this doctrine one may allow a considerable element of truth. But when it is presented, as it is by the Communist philosophy, as the whole truth concerning morality, it is false to the nature of man and pernicious to the free society.

Historically, there can be no doubt that the free society and the moral doctrine on which it depends largely derive from Christianity. The pre-Christian democracies of the Greek world were not free societies. The Athenian democracy for a brief period was extraordinary for the thoroughness with which it democratized its institutions, even to the extent of selecting its officers of state by lot; but it was not in our sense a free society at all, because it was based on a large slave-population, and because it did not pretend to tolerate minority opinion. The free society is, indeed, a quite recent institution which attained theoretical completeness, even in Britain, only in the last generation, when the franchise was extended to women. It gradually developed—with increasing speed in the 19th century—from the time of the Parliamentary revolution in the middle of the 17th century. That revolution is misrepresented by Marxist theory. It was at once economic, and political, and religious; and these impulses were complementary to each other. To represent the economic factor as fundamental and the others merely derivative from it, and illusory compared to it, is to falsify the reality. It

was a revolution made by the whole Man, and the decisive dynamic force which carried it through to victory was religious, and specifically Protestant Christian. It was the insistence on the right of the individual to worship God after his own fashion, according to the dictate of his conscience.

The flower* of the Parliamentary armies—Cromwell's New Model—fought primarily for toleration. The aim was vividly expressed in some of Cromwell's speeches, and magnificently in Milton's "Arcopagitica": in both of which the imaginative reader even to-day can feel the throb and pulse of "mighty workings." And it is by the criterion of toleration that we must judge the severity and ruthlessness of Cromwell's dealing with the Roman Catholics who fought against him. He was refusing to tolerate the intolerant: the professors and armed champions of the religion which burned its heretics. To minds habituated to the secure and all-comprehending toleration of the free society of the 19th century his severity has seemed inordinate. Now that the free society is menaced by a new form of completely intolerant religion, it is much less certain that his severity was avoidable.

The situation of those days had points of resemblance with the situation to-day. The intolerant religion, which claimed to be universal, had its spearhead in an immensely powerful nation-state, namely, Spain, which had but lately failed in its effort to reduce England to submission to the True Faith. In Spain had arisen the new, rigidly disciplined and utterly obedient, militant religious order of the Jesuits, who showed themselves quite fearless in their secret missions to indoctrinate the rebellious and heretical nations. They offended the moral conscience of the protestant-minded, even among Catholics, by their indifference to the means they employed to gain their end—Pascal's "Lettres à Un Provinciale" are the classical expression of this indignation. On the other hand, they achieved great and humane success in educating the more primitive peoples of the American continent, and in protecting them from exploitation. There is perhaps a pertinent analogy here with the profound difference between

the moral validity and attractive power of Communism as it reaches out to the peoples of the East, who have never achieved or come near to achieving the free society, and as it reaches out to the free societies of the West.

The Spanish onslaught on the embryonic free societies culminated in the prolonged horrors of the Wars of Religion. From these Britain was spared, except in the mild and creative form of the Parliamentary Wars. The conflict which produced a fearful retrogression of civilization in Germany produced a splendid advance in England. Simultaneously, over a period of a hundred years, from 1650 to 1750, a genuine religious and intellectual toleration was established, and an effective system of parliamentary government invented. In this society of freedom, intellectual and inventive powers were liberated which enabled England to revolutionize her methods of production, and to lead the world into the technological civilization of the present day. That progress had, as everyone knows, *its dark side*; but the social conditions of England at its worst during the rise of industrialism were superior to those of any country on the continent of Europe.

Of this whole process, we maintain, the 17th century struggle for freedom of conscience and worship in England was the origin. In that process, the previous prolonged contest between an authoritarian Church and an authoritarian State, as it were over the body of the mass of the people, was gradually transformed into a moral tension in the individual person—the member of the free society—whereby he became fully alive, and entered into a new dimension of human experience—the life of freedom and responsibility. The polar tension of the macrocosm became the polar tension of the microcosm.

This was a great human achievement, but to a large extent it was an unconscious achievement, or only a partly conscious one. God's Englishmen, as Milton justly called them at a moment of destiny, "muddled through" to the free society by struggling for intimate things that they knew to be precious; in pursuing them they risked anarchy, as it seemed, yet reasserted order. It was the patient and persistent travail of England to be delivered of something

new in the history of the human race : of which the free society of England is one manifestation, and the free society of the United States another.⁹ They are twin manifestations of the one thing : the monarchical and republican embodiments of the free society. And they were begotten in germ and potentiality at the same time, by the one creative act, in which Milton participated and of which he was the poet-prophet : the assertion of conscience as the foundation of right reason and true religion.

When that seed came to fruition in the fully developed free society, the original Christian inspiration was also fulfilled. The wheel had turned full circle since Jesus had proclaimed that men should be members of one another because they were the fellow-children of God : but, since this was verily a creative process, the circle was a spiral. The free society was back over its point of origin, in the original Christian message, but in a new dimension. It is important to understand this, because much depends upon the free society becoming fully conscious of the nature of its high calling.

When Jesus first proclaimed the free society, in the form of the brotherhood of men and women who had come to know that they were all children of the one God who was a loving Father, he proclaimed it in the social context of a universal and authoritarian society—the Roman Empire—whose authority he made no attempt to challenge. “Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s ; and unto God the things which are God’s,” was an essential and self-imposed limitation of his message. The imaginative pictures of Jesus as the would-be leader of a proletarian or nationalist rebellion are entirely astray ; and they do violence to the historical evidence. Not only is that famous saying of Jesus integral to the body of his teaching, but the evidence is explicit that Jesus was found quite innocent of any offence against the Empire by the Roman Procurator, who, nevertheless, allowed the Jewish priestly caste to “take him and judge him according to your law,” washing his hands, literally and figuratively, of the religious question.

Jesus accepted the Roman Empire. It was proof of his far-seeing prophetic insight ; but it cut clear across the

fanatical temper of the Jews of his time, whose fanaticism led in the next generation to the great Rebellion, the siege of Jerusalem, and the final ruthless scattering of the Jewish race. The free society Jesus proclaimed was a community within the great society of the Roman Empire. But it was not a merely religious community, it was a social community as well. The historical evidence is again explicit that a simple communism was the spontaneous expression of his teaching by his immediate followers after his death. They were obviously continuing what had prevailed during his lifetime; and the tradition was maintained, though with less fidelity as the centuries passed, throughout the history of the early Church. Indeed, the whole conception of a "merely religious" association is alien to any form of Christianity which has not completely forgotten the original message.

As the Church grew, it gradually patterned itself on the organisation of the Roman state, and became almost a religious-social state within the state; but, in this in true accord with Jesus' teaching, it did not conceive itself as hostile to the Roman state. To the bitter end it accepted the Empire, looked with apprehension upon its decay, and shrank with horror from the thought of its demise: horror tempered by the conviction (which received classical expression in St. Augustine's "*De Civitate Dei*") that the Church represented the city-state of God, which was eternal. On desperate occasions and very reluctantly, when the administrative fabric of Empire had actually collapsed, great leaders of the Church would take on the responsibility of secular government; but they were unhappy in what seemed to them a wholly unnatural situation and hastened to legitimize, by crowning, any practicable successor to the powers of the Roman Emperor.

Hence arose the great mediæval conception of Church and State, as twin authorities. The Church was, in the last resort, supreme, since it had the power to legitimize the State. A secular ruler whose power was not symbolically conferred by the Church, acting as the vice-regent of God, was not a lawful king. The subordination of State to Church was more theoretical than actual, since in fact the

secular ruler, whether he were a lawful king or not, ruled to a large extent as he liked, though within the extraordinary limitations imposed by a feudal society: nevertheless, the Church imposed a real check upon him. It could absolve his subjects from their allegiance to him. Since there were very few people in the Middle Ages who did not really and truly believe that the Church held the keys of Heaven and Hell, and could virtually decide a man's fate in the hereafter, the ultimate control of the Church over the secular state was assured. Moreover, the Church was a universal organisation, far more elaborate and flexible than the secular state, which was, in comparison, rudimentary. Indeed, the secular state entirely depended for its administrative personnel upon the Church, which had a complete monopoly of education, and maintained and developed the administrative tradition of the Roman Empire.

At this point we may regard the *respublica Christiana* of the Middle Ages as an impressive macrocosmic "projection" of the original brotherhood of believers proclaimed and instituted by Jesus. The society of the members of the Kingdom of God, within the secular order of the Roman Empire, had gradually replaced the Roman Empire itself. Citizenship of Rome had been transformed, in the territory of the Western Empire, into membership of the Church. It was as a member of the Church, which retained much of the old imperial organisation, that the mediæval man had (in a different form) the personal dignity and value that formerly accrued to him as a Roman citizen, and experienced some sort of human unity, such as the Empire had given. This transformation had been possible because "the End of the World," the great revolutionary change in the cosmos which Jesus anticipated, and which the earliest Christians also looked for, did not occur. The community of those who had become, by an inward and spiritual revolution (*metanoia*), conscious sons of God and members of his Kingdom, which was coming soon and suddenly, had had to accommodate itself to the fact that the world was going on, and the process of history would continue. The first beginnings of that process of accommodation are recorded in the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

The members of the Kingdom of God thus became a community in the world in time, and their actual entrance into the Kingdom was postponed until after their death, when they would await, in various conditions of purgation, the Last Judgment, from the worst consequences of which the Church could save them. This tremendous elaboration of the original message of Jesus cannot fairly be called a falsification of it, since the message in its original form could not have been maintained against the fact of the continued existence of the world in time (*hoc sæculum*, as the Latin Fathers called it). By and large, the mediæval Church must be reckoned a marvellous creative adaptation of the original message of Jesus to the necessities of historical existence.

But something infinitely precious had been discarded in the process. This was the element of personal confrontation with God—the immediate and revolutionary recognition of God as the Father indeed. Automatic membership of the Church by infant baptism was a symbolic substitute for this; but the gulf between symbol and reality was tremendous. By becoming a dogmatic and authoritarian Church, the Kingdom of God had been prematurely universalized. "Except ye become as little children. . . ." was an invitation to spiritual revolution in an adult mind; it had been changed into "Ye are little children, and must believe and obey." Nothing else, we may freely admit, was possible, if the Church was to become universal. Men were little children.

In respect of the original message of Jesus, the great synthesis of the Middle Ages must be called the period of universal and infantile Christianity. Its universality depended on its infantility. The entry of Christianity into adult life began when the infallible authority of the priesthood was challenged by the claim to liberty of conscience. Straightway and inevitably the universality of the Church began to disintegrate. The succeeding phase—the formation of national Churches—was obviously a very temporary form assumed by the ferment of historical creation. The national Church was merely an adjunct of the absolutist and internationally anarchic national state, which sought to

take advantage of the still existent, and still socially necessary, tradition of the universality of Christianity, in order to secure a secular coherence in the national society. It was not until the transitional national Church had been in turn disintegrated by a more conscious insistence on liberty of conscience that the beginnings of a new Christian universality became concrete and visible. The form of this new Christian universality was "the free society," created by the growing spirit of tolerance as a body politic for its habitation. An actual society in which all men could commune with God and serve him as their conscience commanded, subject only to the limitations set on their behaviour by the Law, which was approved by the common moral conscience, was a Christian society in a new sense: it was an adult Christian society. The old dichotomy between authoritarian Church and authoritarian State was overcome, and replaced by a new identity between their essences, in a society in which neither Church nor State was authoritarian.

The fact that the free society was developed in an age of Reason and Erastianism, and ceased to be explicitly Christian, has hindered many from understanding how profoundly Christian a form of society it is. For "explicitly Christian" has a definite meaning only in reference to the actual cultus of the universal Christian Church of the Middle Ages. A free society could be "explicitly Christian" only by ceasing to be a free society: for it is inherent in the free society that the member of it should have full liberty not to be a Christian—not, that is to say, "explicitly Christian." But the free society is "implicitly Christian," which is much more important. For which is the more truly Christian society? That which does not tolerate that its members should be other than "explicitly Christian," or that which does? The latter, indubitably. The former is, indeed, almost a caricature of a Christian society.

PART II

CHAPTER XII

THE CHARACTER OF THE FREE SOCIETY

It is by virtue of its toleration that the free society can justly claim to be the first and only true Christian society established by man and God. The fact that its Christianity is implicit is the seal of its authenticity, for it means that one part at least of the essential Christian message has at long last been realised in the actual behaviour of a great society of men. Mediæval Christianity achieved nothing to compare with this, for an authentic expression of the spirit of Jesus. The noblest achievements of mediæval Christianity were, after all, the achievements of men who condoned such horrors as the extermination of the Waldenses. We may gladly admit that they had no choice, or rather that nothing more Christian was historically possible, because in those lawless times a society based on toleration would have had no hope of survival. But we must never allow ourselves to forget that the mediæval Church did literally exterminate those who, reaching back to the authentic Christian spirit, sought to establish a tolerant and equalitarian society. That severity was the price that had to be paid for the universality of the mediæval Church, and its concrete and visible universality was the necessary condition of its power, which was, on the whole, beneficent. But the price was paid at the cost of a continuous outrage to the Christian spirit: of which, I am prepared to believe, many of the nobler minds in the mediæval Church were fully conscious, even while they accepted the necessity of it. Similarly, when the time had come for a final emancipation from the authoritarian Church, Oliver Cromwell had to pay the price of keeping the spirit of Jesus alive, by outraging it, when he waged the same ruthless warfare against Catholics in arms, as the Church had done against the heretics who

were often more Christian than itself. But, as we have already insisted, there was a difference : Cromwell did not, because he dared not, tolerate the intolerant, whereas the mediæval Church did not, because it dared not, tolerate the tolerant. Cromwell's act of ruthlessness was a final one : it slew, once for all, the devil of organised intolerance within the confines of the British society, and ensured that the only kind of Roman Catholicism that would be permitted to survive in that society was one which immediately in fact, however reluctantly in theory, surrendered the claim to absolve men from their allegiance to the tolerant national society.

We emphasise this distinction, not because we are at all concerned to maintain that Cromwell was a nobler or more Christian man than some of the pious, sincere and conscientious rulers of the mediæval Church whom we have imagined to exist, as Dostoevsky imagined one in the Grand Inquisitor ; but because the case of Cromwell has, we think, a clear lesson for our time. The Christian spirit can act, responsibly and politically, only within the limits of the possible : and to keep within those limits an outrage to the Christian spirit may be required. I fully and freely absolve the conscious rulers of the mediæval Church for their outrage to the Christian spirit, because I believe it was necessary in order to save the framework of Christian civilization from collapse. But it is, I am convinced, a far lesser outrage to the Christian spirit to exterminate the intolerant, than to exterminate the tolerant. For the tolerant to exterminate the intolerant is a final liberation ; for the intolerant to exterminate the tolerant is not : because the process must continue. The spirit of toleration must, of necessity, continually reassert itself, and be continually repressed, until it conquers. The persecutions of the Mediæval Church had to be organised into a permanent system in the Inquisition. That perfection of organisation was the sign of its approaching death. Cromwell's ruthlessness was against the spirit of intolerance, of which the Inquisition was the symbol and instrument ; and it was totally victorious. It never had to be repeated.

Those who believe that the free societies, because they

are truly Christian societies, cannot and must not contemplate a deliberate war against the intolerant society, should ponder the significance of Cromwell's ruthlessness in the long and agonising struggle of humanity towards the free and truly Christian society. That ruthlessness towards the intolerant, because it was deliberate and conscious, was a final liberation: such a liberation could not have been achieved by the methods of George Fox, to whose message Cromwell did not shut his ears or his soul. By his deliberate outrage to the Christian spirit, in the service of Christ, Cromwell made actual a society in which Quakers could live and propagate their doctrine. Cromwell died, uncertain of his own salvation, with only the certain memory that he had once been "in grace"—assured of his communion with God. But that was long ago. Since that time he had entered, by his own deliberate and responsible decision, into the realm of political action, of incessant choices between evils for the sake of good—evils of which he could only choose the lesser. That he did not shrink from the decision was the cause why George Fox was free to prosecute his ministry. If George Fox died with the assurance that he had walked all his life with God, it was because Oliver Cromwell had risked his salvation by parting company with God.

There are moments in human history when Christ is most truly served by those who crucify him, knowing what they do. In my considered conviction Oliver Cromwell belongs to this noble and tormented company. I also believe that many rulers of the mediæval Church belonged to it. But their example has no relevance to our predicament. If anyone were to maintain that the leaders of the new Communist social organism are the counterparts of the rulers of the mediæval Church, and have a right to exercise the same ruthlessness in exterminating the tolerant, the reply is simple. "The only progress of mankind is progress in charity."¹⁰ The spiritual and moral advance of humanity is from intolerance to tolerance. The achievement of the free society in separate nations is the first step towards the goal. The second step, perhaps the most arduous and difficult, is to establish a free society of nations.

The third, which would be by far the easiest, once the second step is taken, is to make the free society of nations a free society of free societies. That is to universalize the Christian society in the new dimension. The effort to establish by organised intolerance a new universal society cannot, at this point of human development, claim the indulgence based on imaginative understanding which we accord to the mediæval Church. The mediæval Church was the best possible in the advance towards the authentic Christian society; the universal and intolerant new social organism is the worst conceivable. It is what Dostoevsky would have called a "monkey caricature" of the mediæval Church.

Those who wish to serve the Christian society, or the free society—and today they are indistinguishable—must accept the example of Cromwell, and be prepared, like him, to outrage the spirit of Christ, in making war, if need be, to compel Soviet Russia to enter a free society of nations. It will be a final liberation of man from the menace of war, and ultimately from organised intolerance.

The free society is not good because Christ desired it. Christ desired it because it was good. It was for this that he laid down his life: to create a society of men who would tolerate one another because they knew it was good so to do. He desired more than this: he desired a society of men who would love one another, because they knew it was good so to do. But toleration is the first and most essential step towards love: perhaps as near to love as men in a great society can ever get, outside their narrower and more personal associations. That a tolerant society is good is self-evident now, though it may cease to be self-evident if tolerant societies become so forgetful of the law of their being that they tolerate the intolerant. This ignorant weakness caused the collapse of the nascent free society in Germany, and it may well cause the collapse of the free society in France. If the free society is undermined by its tolerance of those who are deliberately working against it, repudiating the religious and moral principles on which it is based, it will cease to be self-evident, or indeed evident at all, that the free society is good, because it will become anarchic

and full of violence. A free society riven by violence and anarchy is a contradiction in terms.

If we are asked to say why a free society which, by its conscious or instinctive proscription of intolerance, remains a free society indeed, is self-evidently good, we appeal, first, to the direct evidence of its own members. No other evidence than that of members of the free society can be admitted, for only in the free society are its members free to give their evidence. It would be mere foolishness to seek the evidence of the members of a totalitarian society on whether their society was good. The evidence is not to be had, because its members are not free to give their opinion. Since it would be equally foolish to pretend that there is a higher court of appeal as to the goodness of any society than the whole body of those who live in it, and since it is only in a free society that the whole body of its citizens can voice their opinion, it is plain that so long as a free society exists it is self-evidently the best form of society. "So long as it exists" is the operative phrase. For the continued existence of the free society requires a continuous moral effort. A free society in which tolerance has become a form of inertia is in decline, and passing out of existence. To the extent to which the required moral effort is not made, because its members out of indolence or apathy, or by intellectual conversion to doctrines which deny the reality of the moral law, refuse the obligation to preserve it, the free society itself is dead.

No doubt it is a Utopian demand that all the members of a free society should be fully conscious of their duty towards it, which is to be fully responsible persons leading the life of sustained moral consciousness—that tension within the microcosm between the ideal and the possible which corresponds, in the new dimension of the free, or Christian society, to the macrocosmic mediæval tension between Church and State. If that ideal demand were fully satisfied the tension itself would cease to be. But the intellectuals—the "clerisy"—of the free society must endure this tension to the uttermost of their capacity; they must be unwearying in their effort to prevent the habit of tolerance becoming a mere habit, and above all to

prevent the plain issues of right and wrong from being confused and obscured in simpler minds. It is their duty to keep bright and pure the flame of instinctive loyalty to the free society, by making clear to themselves and to others the justice of its claim to that loyalty. It is the only form of society in which men can be men, living the life of responsibility and freedom.

That is the second reason why the free society, so long as it exists, is self-evidently good. It enables men to contribute freely to the society as a whole the best which they have to give—not all, perhaps, but the best. Not merely in the obvious sense by which men, freed from the coercion of external authority, thinking and uttering their thoughts in freedom, must constitute a richer matrix than any other for the progressive revelation of truth; nor merely in the sense by which a free society, perfected in the habit of allowing the minority of today to become the majority of tomorrow, declares its belief that formulations of the truth are provisional, save the one—that the free society is the sole means to truth—by which its own internal freedom and receptivity is guaranteed; but in the still deeper and more recondite sense by which the action of the fully conscious member of such a society is a living point in which the tension between the ideal and the possible is continuously resolved—to the greater glory of God, and the greater dignity of man. In the mind of such a man, the possible is always what is possible within the free society. It is safeguarded, by its own inward law of limitation, from the titanism and diabolism which inevitably invade and corrupt the purposes of those whose lawless thought disregards this limitation. For that is indeed a diabolism which, in the pretended interests of man, enslaves him to the construction of the material economy of a society from which he cannot benefit, save as a slave. The means destroys the end.

In the free society, on the contrary, the end is always present in the means. It is, so long as it exists, always as good as it can be at any given moment. It could only be "better" than it actually is, by becoming fundamentally worse—that is, by depriving its members of their free and

responsible choice. If, as is in fact true, many are, through defect of understanding, incapable of a free and responsible choice, the remedy lies in the enlargement of understanding. And that, in a free society is ultimately inevitable, *provided it remains free*. Maintain the freedom of the free society ! This is the real and valid contemporary meaning of " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." For, as we have shown, the free society, rather than the Christian Churches, is the Kingdom of God on earth : and it is only in so far as the Christian Churches acknowledge that their loyalty to God must be primarily expressed in their loyalty to the free society that they are really doing their Master's work today.

The Christian Churches do not know what is good for man beyond what is implicit in the working of the free society. In so far as they have a clear message to mankind, it is to deepen its understanding and appreciation of the free society, as the brotherhood of love by and through which alone the undeclared purposes of God may be made manifest. No longer where two or three are gathered together in His name is He there in the midst of them ; He is in the midst of the free society for ever. If His presence is withdrawn, it will be because the free society has ceased to be free, not because the Churches are neglected. The Churches will cease to be neglected when they have learned that their mission is to purify and nourish the flame that burns at the heart of the free society.

The free society itself does not know what is good for man ; it knows only the conditions on which he can come nearer to knowledge of that good, and those conditions it seeks to maintain. Those who profess to know more, know less : whether they speak in the name of God, or of Science. Only the free society itself can determine whether the grandiose plans for human welfare, or human salvation, are really such as will increase the goodness and humanity of human living. The wisest of the planners of a new society, who will also be the humblest because he will understand and revere the limitations within which he must work, cannot know that the shoe will not pinch intolerably. Only experience can determine that, and only the free

society is free to learn from experience—from experience that is experience, because there is a continuing moral personality in society to absorb it—and not from catastrophe, which shatters the moral personality of society.

The free society is a brotherhood of love. That will sound far too splendid a title for the strange complex of conflicting purposes that the free society actually is. But we have only to look closely to see how marvellous a thing it is. After all, when love is not intimate and personal, it can only find expression in “letting another be.” This diffused love of the free society is real and astonishing, as it gathers strength, and passes from the mere negative of non-interference to the positive determination to secure equality of opportunity of development for all. The goal will never be finally attained; but that is no reason why we should regard it as invalid, or a deceitful mirage. There can, and should be, a continually closer approximation to equality of opportunity within a free society. The danger comes when ignorant or evil men promise equality at the cost of the free society itself: that is to entice men to surrender the real equality which they have for an equality which they can never attain without the one they have lost. The spectacle and experience of a free society, instinctively alert against this treachery, groping towards a greater diffusion of freedom, by trial and error, amid the bodings of Cassandras and the dogmatisms of doctrinaires, is a strangely moving one.

The third reason why the free society is self-evidently good is that it can be universalized without contradiction. It seeks, as the condition of its own existence, to establish a free society of nations. As it has eliminated violence within itself, so it is ultimately compelled to eliminate violence between the nations, or to perish in the effort to do so. The free societies of Britain and America have been slow in coming to full consciousness of this inward compulsion, and it is only under the menace of the new agencies of mass-destruction that the awareness has become acute. That is, as we showed in a previous chapter, because war has now ceased entirely to be a rational means of determining the just claims of nations, as it was during most of the 19th

century, when the free societies were perfecting their own development. Now the necessity of abolishing war is stark and physical. Britain has come to the point of formally declaring her willingness to become a loyal member of a free society of nations; America has declared hers, in respect of the control of atomic energy. These advances have not been made out of weakness, as the cynics pretend, America alone is powerful enough, at the present moment, to enforce her will on any nation. They have been made through genuine concern at the appalling danger in which humanity now stands. The menace to the free societies is, indubitably, greater than that to the totalitarian society; because it is a menace to their institutions. They cannot prepare for the new type of warfare and remain free societies. If they have the will to remain free societies, they must abolish war.

The free societies, and they alone, possess a pattern and habit of social living by which this can be done. A totalitarian society does not. Its pattern and habit of social living are based on violence. It can universalize itself, only by universalizing violence; and can achieve world-peace only by undoing all the painful and laborious travail of the Christian civilization of the West. It can establish world-peace only by spreading over the world a vast slave-state in which the new authoritarian State and the new authoritarian Church are combined into a single institution of oppression. Even by the utmost leniency of imagination, that is nothing better than a revival of the Byzantine Empire. That endured, indeed, a thousand years after the Roman Empire had collapsed. But the collapse of the Roman Empire was the prelude to a period of creative travail in the West which has continued uninterrupted to this day, to the final realization of the Christian society in the free society. Think what the Renaissance of the West did in four hundred years with the heritage of Greece, which Byzantium had hugged sterile to itself for a thousand! With the divine inspiration to free inquiry, re-learned from the Greeks, it overthrew the pretensions of an authoritarian Church that had become corrupt, renewed the vitality of the Christian inspiration, set forth

on the momentous quest of scientific discovery, opened up the New World, and battled its way to the free society, in which reason and religion are one in freedom—the anti-type of the new Byzantinism, in which State and Church are one in a unitary oppression.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PURPOSE OF THE FREE SOCIETY

WE have stressed the Christian origin of the free society for several reasons. First, in the interest of historical truth, because we are convinced that Marxism gives a radically false picture of history. As a corrective of idealistic history it is invaluable; as a complete and self-sufficient picture of the historical process, it is pernicious. Moreover, its reduction of the ethical and religious motive to nullity is patently absurd, because conventional Marxism entirely fails to account for the fact of Marx himself, who becomes a *lusus naturæ*, or a supernatural saviour interpolated into the process of history. In actual fact, Marx—influenced by a combination of Jewish messianism and Hegelian idealism—assumed without question that human history was an inevitable progress to better things. He merely took the ethical will to amelioration away from the individual person and planted it in the process of history as a whole, just as Hegel had done. The only persons to whom he, surreptitiously, allowed a valid ethical will were the “bourgeois intellectuals”—himself the pioneer—who were converted to the new religion of salvation through the proletariat, and identified themselves with the political movement of the proletariat and the march of historical necessity towards the millennium.

But when this theory is taken out of the melodramatic scenery—the violent revolutionary drama—in which Marx set it, and is set in a free (that is, a non-revolutionary) society, the identification of the bourgeoisie with the proletariat becomes an oddly familiar spectacle. The number of members of the middle-class in Britain who positively voted Labour in the election of 1945 must run into hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions; while the number of those who have not the faintest intention of doing other than obey the Labour government while it is in

power includes them all. So that, in humdrum fact, the *whole* of the bourgeoisie in the free society of Britain is now either identified with the proletariat, or pledged not to resist it by violence, provided that it observes the fundamental law of the free society.

Thus we may truly say that in Britain there has been a mass-conversion of the bourgeoisie to the cause of the proletariat, on the understanding that it keeps to the rules of the free society. That governing condition is, of course, of decisive importance. Except on those terms such a mass-conversion would have been inconceivable. But how and why does this limiting condition come to be accepted and observed, indeed taken for granted, by both sides? There is nothing in the whole of Marxist theory to explain this crucial phenomenon. True, Marx himself admitted that in Britain the victory of the proletariat might happen like that—"by peaceful and legal means." But why? Probably, Marx, if he had been asked to explain it, would have had recourse to that most un-Marxist conception which he had previously invoked to explain why the French workers were more heroic in the workers' cause than the Germans; it was due, he said, to their peculiar "political genius." Foreign observers frequently speak of the peculiar "political genius" of Britain, and almost certainly Marx would have agreed with them. But how it can be accounted for on Marxist principles passes conjecture.

However, since Marx (as he insisted) was Marx and not a Marxist, we may accept his non-Marxist explanation, as far as it goes. But we cannot leave it there. We must ask in what this "political genius" of Britain consists. The answer is simple. It consists in the "genius" for compromise, for avoiding internal violence like the plague—in short the "genius" for maintaining the free society. And that, as we have demonstrated, consists and can consist in nothing else than the moral will, widely diffused through the members of the free society, to avoid internal violence. A theory of history, a theory of political and social revolution, which neither recognises the reality of that moral will nor accounts for its emergence, but treats it alternately

as non-existent and supernatural, is a travesty of history.

That is the first reason why we have stressed the Christian origins of the free society: to correct this travesty of history which the Communist mind swallows with childish credulity as an integral part of its materialist religion, and uses to undermine the belief in the moral will, and the habit of exercising it, on which the free society depends. In so far as the Communist philosophy does nullify the moral will in the converts which it makes, it may be said to prove itself, much in the sense of Blake's dictum that "all that can be annihilated must be annihilated." On the other hand, in so far as members of the free society resist this corruption by affirming the reality of the moral will, and so maintaining the free society, they nullify the Communist philosophy.

The second reason for stressing the Christian origins of the free society is that we desire all its members to be fully conscious of them, and of the manner in which the prophetic essence of the original Christian message is fulfilled and substantiated in it. This we desire equally for Christians and non-Christians. For Christians in order that, having regard to the present extremity of the human crisis, they may give up, once for all, their presumptuous tendency to insist that the indispensable condition of the continued existence of the free society is a return to credal and institutional Christianity—the Christianity of the Churches. That is nonsense, and very self-complacent nonsense. It is the exact reverse of the true situation. What the Christian Churches have to recognise is that the free society, in itself, is more Christian than they are: the free society even knows the doctrine better than they do, and it certainly does the works better than they. Not until they recognise that the universality of the Christian Church is dependent on the universality of the free society will they be really furthering and not confusing their Master's work.

We desire equally that non-Christian members of the free society should be conscious of the Christian origins in order that they also may be benefited by a decent humility towards the heroes and the struggles of the past, and become aware of the thrilling continuity of history. Until

they recognise that Christianity has been the form taken by the effort of humanity towards a universal society of brotherhood and peace, through which alone the inward meaning of human life may be fully and progressively manifested, they will fall short of that positive and religious faith in the significance of the free society which men need so desperately today. It is not the proletariat, but the free society, which has the mission of liberating mankind; and only in so far as the proletariat is subdued to the creative morality and the religious dignity of the free society will its self-emancipation be prevented from becoming its self-enslavement.

Once it is clearly seen that the free society is something far greater than a happy political contrivance, or a domestic convenience, namely, the social embodiment of the moral law "towards which the whole creation has groaned and travailed up till now," its Christian origins must be a cause for deep satisfaction. Men cannot, surely, continue much longer to be so afraid of the word Christian that they almost feel that a moral law cannot be a moral law because Christ first proclaimed it. Mighty spiritual discoveries have been made in human history, and the mightiest was this of Christ's. Even after nearly two thousand years we are now only at the door of the new world which he revealed to men: and it is by no means certain that we shall pass over the threshold. We shall be through the door only when the world is definitely set towards becoming a free society of free societies; which will be so soon as a free society of nations has been established, and war abolished. If we pronounce that that is Utopian, at least let us be clear that by our verdict humanity is self-condemned to death.

It is not Utopian. The humanity of the free societies can will this thing, if the goal and the alternative are clearly set before it. But it must be prepared for a great act of self-sacrifice. I do not believe that this sacrifice will be necessary, provided the will to make it is there.

This is the third reason why I have stressed the Christian origins of the free society, because those who understand it in its true reality as the authentic Christian community will be prepared to make this sacrifice, and will urge others to be

prepared. They will do this not as "believing Christians," but simply as men with an imaginative understanding of the necessity of preparedness for sacrifice as the means of passing into a new dimension of human living. The Christ, who by his death became the seed of the free society, went to his death rather than deny the truth he knew: that God was a loving Father to all men, and that all men were brothers. It was by his willing death in loyalty to this vision of God that the vision did not perish with him. I do not see how the hardest-headed non-Christian member of the free society can deny this simple fact. The recognition of it is enough to bind the non-Christian and the Christian together as brothers.

But, though I deeply desire this closer brotherhood of Christian and non-Christian within the free society, I do not say, or indeed believe, that it is absolutely necessary. Although I cannot allow that any man can fully understand the free society without understanding its Christian origins, I freely admit that any man can understand it sufficiently if he recognises, simply, that it is held together by the moral law which requires its members to allow freedom of conscience to one another, and forbids internal violence. That does not exhaust the content of the moral law that binds the free society together, though it serves to define its scope. The moral law also requires obedience to the positive law of the free society, but at the same time it demands as a condition of this obedience (in order that it shall be not blind obedience, but a responsible moral act) that the positive law shall not offend against, but more fully articulate the moral law itself. The positive laws of the free society are themselves an expression of the society's effort to formulate more clearly what is the moral law.

Thus there are, in fact, two kinds of moral law, or two aspects of the moral law, operative in the free society. The first expresses the moral will of its members to be and to remain a free society. This requires its members to allow freedom of conscience to one another, and therefore forbids that violence be done to any man on account of his opinions. But since in a free society there are irresponsible members, who are too immature "to know what conscience is," this

freedom has to be limited by law, which in a free society, is the free self-limitation of the society by itself.

The laws of a free society express a progressive discovery of the moral purposes of the society. By a continuous limitation of its own freedom, it discovers how to be more truly free, just as in private life a man learns what self-disciplines are necessary to enable him "to get the best out of himself."¹¹ But whereas the life of a man is three score years and ten, the life of a free society is, or should be, as long as human life endures upon the earth. The free society is in its infancy. It is an adventure that has only just begun; and there should be no end to the process of its discovering the self-limitations that are necessary to enable it to get the best out of itself. Whether this inexhaustible potentiality will be realized depends upon the moral will of its members to remain a free society. But it is well to recognise and to remember that the free society is a new creation, and that there is no reason at all to believe that it is subject to any so-called "law of growth and decay." If it fails, it will be because the moral will of its members has failed.

The purpose of the free society can be defined as the progressive discovery of the conditions of its own continued existence. It is a mistake to imagine that the free society needs a purpose beyond itself. By discovering and obeying the necessary conditions of its own continued existence, it must progressively reveal a purpose beyond itself. The mistake is to imagine that this purpose must or can be defined apart from the free society itself. Strange though it may sound to many earnest inquirers, it is nonsense to seek to define the end at which the free society must aim, in order that it may be judged good. For only the free society can discover what the good is. The good is what the free society discovers to be the necessary conditions of its own continued existence.

This is the simple mystery of the free society. It will not be unexpected by those who understand the Christian origins of the free society. If, as I have tried to show, the free society is the authentic Christian community, there is nothing to be surprised at in its possessing as its note the

mysterium simplicitatis—"the mystery of simplicity"—or in its having no purpose beyond itself. That will be unsatisfying only to those who do not understand the nature of the free society. Those who demand that its purpose should be "the greater glory of God," for example, have failed to see that the free society alone can give real content to that majestic phrase. God will be glorified to the utmost in what the free society does, if it remains a free society. But the important point for the moment is that these characteristics emerge not from any contemplation of the free society as the Christian community, by a Christian mind, but from the investigation of the bare fact of the free society by the non-Christian mind.

It may be retorted that it is my own mind which is investigating it; and that is a Christian mind. Not all of those who read my books would agree with that, and I myself make no such claim, though (I confess) I should dislike it to be described as a non-Christian mind. Anyhow, it would be an untrue description. My mind is a hybrid affair, at once Christian and non-Christian; but it seems to work, or to do the work which I want it to do—namely, to follow patiently the pattern of human history.

However that may be, I am sure that I am capable of emptying my mind of all specifically Christian prepossession or bias in order to contemplate the bare fact of the free society. There are no bare facts in human history, it is true; but it is possible to contemplate the free society quite apart from its Christian origins.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MORAL PERSONALITY OF THE FREE SOCIETY

WHAT distinguishes the free society from other forms of society? It is the prevalence within it, as fundamental "liberties of the subject," of freedom of conscience, of speech, of expression and association. If, in times of extreme emergency, these freedoms are suspended, the society ceases, *pro tanto*, to be a free society; but if they are suspended by a representative government representing the will of a clear majority of the people, and they are suspended with the firm intention of restoring them again so soon as the emergency is passed, the interruption of the continuous freedom of the free society is apparent rather than real. A free society—there can be no doubt—is free to suspend and curtail these fundamental liberties of the citizen at times when their maintenance, in the conviction of a strong majority of the people, endangers the life of the free society itself. That is the criterion by which it can be determined whether a suspension or curtailment of the liberties of the citizen is morally justified: whether or not it is necessary to preserve the life of the free society—not the nation, not Britain, but the free society which the nation composes, or of which Britain is the home.

There are extreme and obvious conditions of emergency, such as war, and even more extreme but less obvious conditions of emergency—this book seeks to demonstrate that one now exists—which may require a temporary limitation of the fundamental liberties of the citizen: of conscience, speech, expression and association. But even normally in the free society they are limited. Speech and expression which is obscene, association which may cause a breach of the peace, is forbidden. But these limitations are imposed by law which is sanctioned by a majority of the citizens, and though their application does occasionally

cause injustice to men who zealously seek the good of the free society, the limitations are approved by the moral conscience of the free society as a whole, and on the whole they are beneficent. For one prophetic writer who is genuinely in advance of the moral conscience of the free society as a whole, there are a dozen who would seek to exploit the appetite for lubricity.

It is doubtful whether there are any other quite fundamental liberties in the free society other than those of conscience, speech, expression and association. The right of property which was considered basic in the early stages of the free society is obviously subject to drastic modification without imperilling the free society. It is impossible to determine clearly beforehand what are the necessary limitations to the modification of the rights of property. But it is evident that there must be some necessary limitations to this process: first, because there is already a general agreement in the free society that without the full possession of some personal property the development of morally responsible persons is prevented; and, second, because the more certainly fundamental freedoms would become illusory if private property were abolished, or its possession made so onerous to the holder (as it was in the late Roman Empire) that free men preferred to be slaves. The necessity of this limitation becomes evident when we consider that the political expression of the fundamental freedoms is the freedom to speak, write and organize for the formation of a Government alternative to the one actually in power. This freedom is *absolutely* necessary to the free society. But it is obvious that, if all property passed to the State, and the instruments of production were completely "socialized," this essential freedom would no longer exist. An organ of State would decide who should be allowed the services of the State printing presses, and the free society would be eviscerated. Thus it is plain that unless a good deal of capital and capital equipment remains in private hands, the formation of autonomous centres of opinion is impossible. Complete "Socialism" must therefore strangle the free society.

Therefore we must add to the fundamental freedoms of

the free society the right to a certain amount of private property, not merely personal, but in the instruments of production. Obviously, there cannot be previous and fixed determination of the extent of this right. The optimum can be discovered only by experiment, that is, by the actual working of a free society, in which the full freedom of the citizens to organize an alternative Government is zealously maintained.

If we ask: why should this freedom, and all that is implied in it, be zealously maintained? The only reply is: Because it is self-evidently good that there should be the maximum of freedom within a society. If anybody takes it upon himself to deny this, as the Communists do, no reply to him is really possible, because there is no common basis for discourse. Nevertheless, it is quite possible to demonstrate that if it is not a self-evident good that there should be the maximum of freedom within a society, then Communism itself becomes a pure insanity, since the one theoretical objective by which its violence is justified by its philosophers is the ultimate attainment of a society of perfect freedom. The Communist leaders say to their unfortunate comrades: "We must take away your freedom now, in order to return it to you a hundredfold hereafter." If that has any sincerity at all, it means that more freedom is self-evidently a greater good than less freedom.

So that even the Communists cannot deny that it is self-evidently good that there should be the maximum of freedom within a society, without turning their doctrine into a nightmare. But they deny that the freedom of a free society is real. What they mean by this it is hard to say. Indeed, when the Communists say that the freedom of a free society is unreal, they are talking nonsense: and very pernicious nonsense. For they arrogate to themselves the power to decide when men, capable of judging their own condition and free to express their judgment of it, are "free." If I were to do under compulsion what the would-be Communist dictators would compel me to do, if they attained to power, I should be "free." If I still refused to be "free," I should be liquidated. This is sheer insanity: since a free society obviously possesses just about as much freedom as

it thinks it is capable of possessing at a given moment. The capacity of a free society for freedom is elastic ; it increases as the sense of responsibility towards the free society grows, that is to say, as the knowledge of the nature of the free society becomes more widespread among its citizens. Now that the franchise has been made equal and universal, the task of educating citizens of the free society into an understanding of their responsibilities and privileges is an arduous and urgent one, which is still being dangerously neglected. But at the lowest the freedom of a society which resolutely maintains the fundamental freedoms which we have specified is incommensurably greater than the freedom of a totalitarian society.

Freedom, of course, always includes freedom to go to the devil ; and the free society is free to renounce its freedom, or (which is more likely) to lose it by moral apathy. It was a commonplace among Greek philosophers that what they called "democracy" easily, and almost inevitably, degenerated into "tyranny," which was their name for "leadership" or personal rule ; and though, as we have insisted, Greek democracy was generically different from the free society, the experience of the Greeks has some warning for us. Moral apathy, the decay of a sense of responsibility towards society as a whole, the proliferation of bureaucracy and the military at the expense of the necessary productive work of the community, *may* produce a situation of exhaustion and anarchy for which authoritarian government is the only immediate remedy. But the faith of the free society is that, if such a condition threatens, "the conscience of the country" will be roused by warnings and the activities of the minority, and make it the majority and entrust the government to it.

The free society lives by this faith : which is a firm belief that its citizens have the moral energy to correct their own mistakes and to correct them in time to prevent serious or irreparable harm being done to the fabric of the free society. It is a faith in its own power to choose the good, and to make sacrifices for the good. What the good is has already been defined : it is the continued existence of the free society—nothing more, nothing less. If we may use the

analogy of the individual person, the faith of the free society is like the determination of an individual to maintain his own intellectual and moral integrity by refusing to deaden his conscience. That requires a high degree of spiritual development in the individual person. Therefore it may be felt that it is inordinate to require it of a society, and that a society which makes so heavy a demand upon itself cannot endure.

This does not follow; and it is important to be clear why it does not follow. The life of a man is brief; the life of a free society is, or should be, long. My personal faith is that it will prove to be everlasting. Its moral and spiritual life is more massive and of a slower tempo than that of the individual. For better or for worse, the individual develops more rapidly than the free society. His conscience works more quickly than the conscience of the free society; and his degeneration is more rapid. A nation will cling to its good habits (and its bad ones) much longer than an individual will. It is therefore possible that a free society may be at a given moment on a higher moral level than the average of its individual members. It has only to continue to will to be a free society, for its conscience to get a much larger place in its activities than it does in those of the average individual. Quite a large number of people who are not over-scrupulous about paying their own debts or their taxes would be scandalized if the State did not discharge its obligations; and similarly many who are distinctly intolerant in their private lives are nevertheless uneasy at the idea that a minority should be suppressed. The old Utilitarian contention that each by pursuing his own interest pursues the benefit of all is not wholly false: a large number of minority-minded citizens make for a sensible majority. Their angularities tend to cancel out.

But the real point is that the moral life of the free society is different *in kind* from the moral life of an individual, or the moral lives of many individuals. That is, indeed, obvious. The difficulty is rather to make a convincing reply to the sceptic who objects that a moral life that is not the life of an individual person is inconceivable: a *non-ens*. Yet there is no doubt that the moral personality of the free

society exists. But how far it exists in societies other than the free society is a very difficult question : because the free society alone possesses the organisation which allows it to have an active "conscience."

I should be inclined to say that earlier historical forms of society have had a rudimentary moral life, but almost always vicarious : as in the conscientious rule of an absolute emperor, like Augustus or Trajan, or the intense spiritual life and responsible co-empire of the mediæval Church in its prime. But only when the free society comes into being does the political society enter into the new dimension of experience : wherein it is not only the literal but the most important truth about the free society that it has a moral life of its own. This entry of the body politic into the moral life is, I am convinced, by far the most significant happening of our times ; and, though the beginning of the whole process dates back to the 17th century, the final leap has been surprisingly sudden, so sudden that men are far less aware than they ought to be of what has really happened. They are distressfully aware of the negative side of the process—the constant restriction of individual freedoms, the decline of craftsmanship, the dissolution of the individual person in the social whole by advancing industrialism—but they are not exultantly aware of the amazing compensation for these indubitable losses, that society as a whole has become a moral being : that a totally new epoch of human history has begun.

Analogically, by a metaphor well approved by usage, we have described this entry of a whole society into the new world of moral life, as the emergence of conscience in an articulate and fully representative form as an institution. The chief organ of the "conscience" of the free society is not the Church, but the Opposition—the organised political minority which seeks to become, and eventually will become, the majority. In Britain, this is significantly called "His Majesty's Opposition," His Majesty the King being the symbol of the nation's will to unity. His Majesty's Government and His Majesty's Opposition respectively embody the nation's will to act, and the nation's will to be constantly critical of its own actions : and these

two institutions together compose a single instrument of expression: the Parliament, wherein the mind, the heart and the soul of the nation are active, in a harmony of creative tension.

Not that the Opposition exhausts the content of the nation's "conscience." It is at work in the Church (though by no means as much as it ought to be), and in innumerable other less venerable voluntary associations, which are contained in the fabric of the free society: such as the Trade Unions, the professional guilds, the Universities. It is also at work in innumerable individual consciences which utter themselves in act, in conversation, and in the writing of journals and books. But these extra-political manifestations of conscience do not attain their full potentiality until they are politicised in Parliament.

Neither, of course, does our emphasis on the crystallisation of the nation's "conscience" in the Opposition imply that the Government is devoid of conscience. It was, before it became the Government, itself the Opposition: it is conscience transformed into act, just as the Opposition is act transformed into conscience. The validity of conscience is tested by action, under the searching scrutiny of act transformed into conscience. Where, as is happily the case in Britain, Parliament is as fully alive and as fully responsible as a collection of six hundred representative men and women may be reasonably expected to be, Government and Opposition are conscious that they are complementary and necessary elements of one body, into which is gathered the will of the free society to live as a free society, to organize itself for more abundant life—to be, in short, a moral being.

This complete moralization of the political society which is attained when the universal and equal franchise is established, can be compared, and can only be compared, with the creative act which religion attributes to the Godhead when he drove man from the innocence of Eden, because he had tasted of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The complete moralization of the political society does not mean that society has become good, but that it has become free to be good or evil. The free society

is capable of sin ; and no other form of society is. It is by a mistaken and unjustifiable transference of our experience of the free society that we think of a totalitarian society as a sinning society. Their sin is not the sin of a society but of a social group. Had either Germany or Russia ever been free societies, their sin would have been terrible indeed ; but neither of them were. For a brief moment Germany became formally a free society, but the hideous devil of intolerance was lurking in the dark from the beginning, planning and doing political murder ; and Russia was turned back into a slave-society at the very moment that it was gathered to organise itself as a free society.

It is by the achievement of tolerance that the free society is possible. By a great moral advance, it becomes capable of sin. Thus, the complete moralization of the political society whereby it becomes a free society is, on the one hand, a prodigious moral advance—an advance towards freedom incomparably and incommensurably greater in humane significance than any advance in economic organisation made by an unfree society ; on the other hand, it brings with it the precariousness and the danger inseparable from the moral and creative life. Every member of the free society is now endowed with freedom and responsibility. The very tolerance which was the condition of that moralization may now be put in jeopardy by the act of faith which has made every adult member of the free society a full and equal participant in its moral life. For tolerance itself may be in part, or even largely, nurtured by lack of responsibility. Slaves are pretty tolerant of one another ; so were the Russian moujiks. The new participants in the moral life of the free society, by the inclusion of whom the society became fully free, are now endowed with responsibility. Therefore they are endowed with power, and power is the capacity for intolerance.

That is the tremendous test of the free society. Tolerance, as it becomes active, imparts power to others. Will that new power itself be tolerant ? The faith that is at the heart of the free society scarcely pauses to ask the question. The free society will and must moralize its members, as it beckons them into a confraternity of which the living law

is that power and tolerance must be one. This great and mysterious power of moralizing its members which the free society takes for granted in itself is, indeed, the condition of its continued existence as a free society. It may be described as a continuous act of faith in Man. But that is a very deceptive phrase. Much more exactly it is a continuous act of faith in the power of the free society, by tradition and education, to make its members moral beings, obedient to the moral law. It is not on the private and individual level that this power is primarily manifest or tested, but in the actions of society as a whole. Will it, or will it not, conceive it as its chief, indeed its sole, end to maintain freedom, which is the means to enable its conscience to be fully active?

Ultimately, therefore, the free society is an embodied act of faith in conscience. It is the social organization which conscience compels, and which conscience has patiently laboured to create for its own habitation and instrument. It is the means by which conscience can be continually operative in the direction of the affairs of men. The free society is the organic body of conscience, at the level of social existence. Just as the conscience of the individual person is dependent upon the physical organism for its manifestation, yet guides the actions of the organism, so the social organism is the necessary vehicle of the conscience of society. In the free society, and in it alone, conscience becomes pervasive of the whole social organism. This is not true of theocracy, nor is it true of the mediæval polarity of Church and State : in so far as conscience is operative in these, it is the conscience of a few men, or of one, authoritatively commanding the children who are the subjects of parental authority." That may be a good or bad condition of society according to whether the conscience of the father is true or false, and whether the children are genuinely immature or merely repressed. But in the free society, the conscience which at its origin was that of a few men has ended by spreading itself throughout society : it is a true conscience, because its effort has been to set free the conscience of others. The gradual, but steadily accelerating liberation of conscience throughout the social organism

culminates in the completely free society. This process is to be imagined as a gradual transmutation of the substance of the social organism, by the spreading of moral personality throughout it. The political forms assumed by this transmutation disguise—perhaps dangerously—its essentially spiritual nature: it is the constant creation of responsible persons until the whole adult membership of the free society has this new status. Every adult member is endowed with freedom and responsibility, that is, with conscience; and society is a new kind of society, now fully integrated, with a conscience of its own.

This is the remarkable process by which humanity compensates itself for the loss of individuality and the limitations of individualism which accompany the process of social integration. The social integration at the unconscious level is produced by industrialism; but industrialism itself is the product of the emancipation of conscience in the few. These twin processes, the social integration at the unconscious level of economic and animal activity, and the spiritual integration which consists in the concomitant expansion of the fraternity of conscience are interdependent and must be understood as one. Those who maintain as the Marxists do, that the social or economic integration is real while the spiritual integration is illusory, maintain a lie—a dangerous and evil lie. Both are real, and any true picture of history must represent the reality of both. Nevertheless, the primacy belongs to the spiritual, both in historical fact, and in the true system of values. Conscience is the dynamic of the free society, which is the creator of industrialism and the modern civilization, as by-products of its own advance to the fullness of freedom.

Almost certainly, the belief that the unfree society can, as it were, “cash in” on the techniques created by the free society is false. The unfree society is, I believe, doomed, first, to use those techniques for destruction—for the destruction of the free and responsible person in their own society, and for the destruction of the free society; and, second, finally to fail in its evil purpose, because the full development of those techniques is ultimately dependent on the self-maintenance of the free and responsible personality,

which is possible only within the free society. The free societies are therefore bound to prevail, on condition that they remain free ; and in order to prevail they have only to will the conditions necessary to their own survival as free societies. Conscience is bound to overcome the parasites of conscience, if it remains conscience.

This sounds more sanguine than I feel. It suggests that I regard the survival and triumph of the free society as inevitable. I do not. In fact I regard it as being in much greater jeopardy than it knows, both in Britain and in America. It is true enough that the free societies have "only to will the conditions necessary to their own survival as free societies." But that simple demand, as we have seen and shall see again, is a very heavy one indeed ; and those who understand what it involves in the way of a moral and spiritual and intellectual renascence may be forgiven for being oppressed by doubts. It is, at any rate, certain that the necessary process of moral renascence, which is so desperately urgent, has hardly begun.

CHAPTER XV

CONSCIENCE AND THE FREE SOCIETY

THE conscience, which is the dynamic life of the free society, is ultimate and perhaps unanalysable. We have tried to explain how it has two manifestations: in the individual person, and in the free society, and that these are intimately connected. They are connected historically and genetically, in that it is the struggle of individuals associated to achieve freedom of conscience from submission to truth promulgated by authority which creates the nucleus of the free society. The operation of that process was strikingly clear in English history, when in the Parliamentary wars the revolutionary dynamic passed from the Presbyterians, who really fought for a new form of authority and a new dogmatic confession to be imposed on all and sundry—"New Presbyterian is but old Priest writ large"—to the Independents, who not merely fought for "a Toleration," but actually embodied it in their military organisation. The contrast between the constitution and ethos of Cromwell's New Model army and that of the disciplined, yet completely intolerant, revolutionary parties of modern times, is remarkable and significant. The whole contemporary issue between the free and the totalitarian society is summed up in it.

Conscience in the individual person and conscience in the free society are connected essentially, also. Since ordered society is the necessary condition of human, or humane, existence, conscience in order to be objectively valid—as distinct from a subjective idiosyncrasy—must be the conscience that is compatible with the continued existence of society. The conscience which, if universalised, would create social anarchy is, to the extent to which its consequences are anarchical, an unreal because self-contradictory conscience. That is not to say that it may not be tolerated within the free society; but how far it shall be tolerated is

a matter for the conscience of society as a whole. To pretend that the free society is a fortuitous conglomeration of "free," that is, anarchical consciences, is an absurdity; it is to confuse Utopia with reality, the new Jerusalem with the city of God on earth. Those who have much dealing with the possessors of anarchical consciences quickly discover that they are incapable of elementary co-operation even towards ends which they have voluntarily chosen, and in enterprises which they have voluntarily joined. Spiritually, they must be classed as extreme egotists; psychologically, as extreme neurotics. A new Jerusalem composed of such people would be a new pandemonium.¹²

Conscience, in order not to be self-contradictory, must will the conditions of its own existence. That is to say, it must will a society in which the freedom of conscience of each is compatible with the freedom of conscience of all. In order that this shall be possible a common content to all conscience is required. That this common content to all conscience exists is the necessary pre-supposition of conscience itself, if it is not to be self-contradictory. Conscience that demands absolute freedom for its possessor, even though it professes to allow absolute freedom for the possessors of other consciences, is a spurious affair. If we seek the common content of all conscience, we shall find it in a form of Kant's famous "categorical imperative."

"The categorical imperative is a single one, and is in fact this: 'Act only according to a maxim by which you can at the same time will that it shall become a general law.' Or, 'Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a general law.'"

This is, as it was intended to be, a good formal description of the common content of conscience, or a good test of the authenticity of conscience. Conscience must will the conditions necessary to its own manifestation in others. These conditions obtain only within the free society, as we have sufficiently demonstrated. Therefore, conscience must will the free society when it does not yet exist, and will the continued existence of the free society when it does.

In a very real sense, it is possible to understand conscience only in relation to the free society. Prior to the

actual achievement of the free society, it was impossible to define the positive content of conscience: distinctly to separate out what was arbitrary and subjective in its manifestations, and what authentic and objective. Not is this yet done finally; nor can it ever be done quite finally. But the free society is the only instrument by which the positive content of conscience can be progressively defined. Certainly, we can define the ultimate goal of conscience, even now: it is the achievement of a society in which the members are bound to one another by love alone—or, in the flatter but not really more illuminating terminology of Marxism, in which “the State has withered away.” Whether humanity will ever get to that condition, I have no idea; but it is quite certain that the goal is very remote and that the only conceivable way of reaching it is by means of the free society.

The free society determines the positive content of conscience, here and now, at every stage on the long and probably unending journey to the ultimate goal. What the free society actually is required to do in order to maintain itself in existence as a free society is the positive content of conscience in its members at any given moment. Not the sum of all the contents of individual consciences, but that which remains when all their self-contradictory and unreal elements have been eliminated. For the decisive and distinguishing dynamic of the free society is the moral will to establish, defend and extend freedom of conscience for all. In order to do this, it finds, by experience, that certain unique forms of political organisation are necessary, to which the “political genius” of the free society clings tenaciously in spite of all theoretical and abstract objections to them; it discovers, also by experience, that certain radical readjustments of the free society’s economy are necessary. It discovers, by experience, that political freedom is not entirely real—not illusory, as the Marxists contend, far from it; but not entirely real—without a widespread measure of economic freedom, in both senses of that ambiguous phrase: widespread economic security, and widespread freedom of economic initiative. It ignores the dogmatic assurances of the doctrinaires that these things are

incompatible and gropes obstinately towards a middle way. And the middle way will be found, if the free society is determined to remain a free society; for then what is exaggerated and unfruitful in its tentative schemes will be corrected and discarded by its maturer experience. As its political institutions are already a concrete definition of the content of conscience, so will its social and economic institutions become a further and equally necessary definition of that content.

That, incidentally, is a convincing demonstration of the essential priority of the political over the social and economic. The political determines whether or not society shall exist and function as a moral being. The *essential* freedom of the free society is its political freedom: by means of that it becomes capable of economic freedom and social freedom, and only if its political freedom is maintained are any of these further freedoms real, and not illusory. Political freedom is the acid test of the reality of all social freedoms whatever. Unless it is present, and unless these other social freedoms have been achieved by its means, they are only further enslavements of the creatures — whether they be called citizens or subjects — which they profess to emancipate.

This is so because the free society is conscience endowed with the capacity of action, and organized as a society. The political organization of the free society takes the form it does because two things are necessary to fully human life: organization as society, and freedom of conscience. They are equally necessary, and it is in the patient struggle to reconcile these twin necessities (which the doctrinaires of three centuries ago reckoned to be even more incompatible than those of today reckon economic security and economic initiative) that the political organization of the free society was slowly and tentatively evolved. Its remarkable institutions are the product of conscience in tension with the necessity of an ordered society. Since that necessity is absolutely real and can be ignored only by false visionaries — Jesus himself was conspicuous by his decisive acceptance of it — what conscience creates in obedience to that necessity (which is an “imperative” as categorical as its own)

represents the actual and objective content of conscience as distinct from its subjective vagaries. Thus the political institutions which are the organic growth and self-articulation of a free society are the objectification of conscience ; and it is either very remarkable, or not remarkable at all, that they are institutions which cannot be worked except where the habit of individual tolerance is endemic, and that they provide for the continuous expression of the conscience of society as a whole. In other words, the reconciliation of freedom of conscience with the necessity of society is achieved by making society itself, by appropriate institutions, the organ of conscience : the means by which conscience continually objectifies itself from generation to generation—in *sæcula sæculorum*, as the faith of the free society believes.

The first objectification of conscience in the political institutions of a free society, which reaches its consummation in the universal and equal franchise, is the necessary condition of further objectifications of conscience : in the creation of further freedoms, or liberations of conscience, always under the limiting condition that the political articulation necessary to the free society shall be preserved. It may be amended, but it must not be harmed or destroyed. Whatever limitation that may impose on the extravagant claims to new freedoms must be accepted, because that limitation is necessary in order that the new freedoms may be freedoms indeed, and not enslavements. The political institutions which are the objectification of conscience, and by which society becomes the organ of conscience, are the guarantee that the legislation which emanates from them is, roughly, a further objectification of conscience. But it would be, as in England it is felt to be, waste labour to elaborate constitutional guarantees for the preservation of these political institutions : because they can be effective only if the common will to work them exists. If that common will should fail, constitutional guarantees would be futile. Thus the political institutions of a free society, for all their venerableness and majesty, are none the less essentially the symbol of a state of mind and a habit of soul : in a very precise sense, sacraments—the outward and visible

signs of an inward and spiritual grace. Faith is necessary to their operation; but by their operation they create faith.¹³

Thus, though it is true—and a very important truth—that in the political institutions of a free society conscience is objectified—it is almost equally important to realize that this institutional objectification is nugatory except as a pattern and rule of behaviour which is supported and maintained by a habit of soul. The political institutions of a free society cannot of themselves preserve it from the evil spirit of intolerance: but they are an embodied conscience in this sense also, that they call to mind in those who are thoughtless rather than evil that there is such a thing as conscience, and that it is not a simple thing. It is the spirit of life itself reaching out delicately towards more life; it is the fine point of consciousness, seeking its way to the truth of things. They are simpletons who imagine that conscience is the voice of God, speaking loud and clear, in a particular revelation to themselves, and announcing His absolute veto on something which they do not wish to do, which the free society requires of them. If, however, they are prepared to endure patiently whatever disabilities the free society imposes upon them, without indulging the self-conceit that they are suffering an intolerable injustice, but acknowledging that the free society itself has a conscience which demands imperatively that it should defend itself and requires that its members should sacrifice themselves to defend her and her political institutions then, simple though they may be, we shall respect them. We shall admit that their conscience is genuine conscience, to the measure of their patience and humility: by which, and by which alone, they will have proved the authenticity of their implicit claim to be citizens of the city which needs no law but love.

Nevertheless, we shall remind them that the law of the free society *is* the law of love: because it is the law which the free society has been compelled to evolve in order that freedom of conscience shall be secured to its members. Those who claim that freedom of conscience absolves them from obedience to that law are either ignorant or corrupt. The utmost that a free conscience can claim,

with integrity, is that it chooses willingly and cheerfully to suffer the penalties imposed by the law rather than unwillingly and resentfully to do the positive acts that the law commands. The conscience that presumes to set itself above the necessities of the free society is a conscience that does not understand, because it has not troubled to understand, the nature of the free society. But, it is equally true that the necessities of the free society are not as the compulsions of the unfree society. The parliament, which is the chief organ of the conscience of the free society, sins against the light, and becomes self-contradictory when, for example, it acquiesces in the promulgation of "unconditional surrender" to its enemy. It is disobedient to the law of its own being. In such an act it sets itself above the law of the free society no less (and in a matter fraught with far more grievous consequences) than the man who, by the working of a spurious conscience, believes himself absolved from obedience to its law. That the parliament of a free society should declare, or acquiesce in a declaration, that it has no terms of surrender to offer an unfree society, is a moral monstrosity. The free society has always terms—simple and obvious terms—to offer its enemy: that it shall become a member of the free society of free societies.

When the parliament of a free society thus betrays the moral law of the free society, it becomes a false conscience and the citizens who are aware of the betrayal are truly absolved from their obedience to it. In the particular case of "unconditional surrender," and the enormities which followed from it the British Parliament was profoundly uneasy. The conscience of the conscience of Britain was not entirely dulled. But a magnificent opportunity was missed of proclaiming the principles of the free society, or of making a reasoned protest against their falsification.

However, this is merely evidence that a free society can sin; it can also repent, as Britain is already repenting in regard to Germany. But an unfree society never repents, because it is always "infallibly" led. In order to have the capacity of repentance, it has to become a free society. It is also an example of the truth that the "necessities" of

the free society are not to be confused with the compulsions of the unfree society. It was no necessity of the free society to proclaim "unconditional surrender"; the necessity of the free society was to offer clear and self-evident terms of surrender. For the necessities of the free society are moral necessities: so to act that the maxim of its action can become a universal law. There is a moral necessity on the free society to defend itself, and to defend—if it possibly can—other free societies against the assaults of unfree societies. There was a moral necessity on the free societies of Britain and France to defend the free society of Czechoslovakia against Nazi Germany. If all the free societies had recognised the obligation so to act that the maxim of their actions could become a universal law, Nazi Germany would never have arisen.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PURGATION OF PACIFISM

BUT, it may be argued, the objector to war on the grounds of conscience is acting in such a way that the maxim of his action could become a universal law. In outward appearance only, and the appearance is delusory. He ignores the free society, which is the indispensable means to his own existence. He forgets that in the unfree society, conscientious objection is unknown and conscientious objectors are exterminated. He atomises human existence, and denies that society is necessary for human life. He proclaims that his only civic obligation, is towards the perfect society whose only law is love: the society that, in Christian terminology, is called "the Communion of Saints." To be a citizen of that city is indeed a noble aspiration, but it demands a saint, indeed. They do not grow easily in the free society; and those within it who profess to be saints are more often hypocrites.

The necessity of the earthly society cannot be ignored except by a spiritual equivocation, but least of all ought the claimant to freedom of conscience as a civic right in the earthly society ignore the categorical imperative to maintain the existence of the earthly society which secures him that right. To such freedom of conscience as he claims there is no civic right whatever: for it is a freedom of conscience which, if universalized, would dissolve all society and all law—not, as he perhaps imagines, in the beatitude of the New Jerusalem, but in universal pandemonium. The saint claims no civic rights; he is indifferent to them, rightly, because his trust is verily in God, and he expects a heavenly city, in comparison with which the earthly city is dross. He is immune from the equivocation which expects this city of God on earth, as the consequence of men, who claim freedom of conscience as a civic right, refusing to defend the society which secures it to them.

The only way—the slow, patient and perilous way—to the city of God on earth is through the free societies. He who demands freedom of conscience as a civic right must, under peril of self-stultification, or worse, accept the sacrifices demanded of him by the society which accords him that civic right. He may, indeed he must, demand that those sacrifices are such, and only such, as do in fact promote or safeguard the life of the free society, or—which is the same thing—are necessary in order that it may universalize itself. He has not merely the right, but the duty, to refuse the sacrifice of his own moral integrity, and the moral integrity of the free society, entailed in such an acquiescence as that in the essentially lawless policy of “unconditional surrender,” or in the abandonment of Czechoslovakia. In the event of such a betrayal of the free society, upon him falls the duty of asserting and becoming the conscience of the free society, when the organs of its conscience are failing. But in so doing, it is not his conscience as an individual that is active, but the conscience of the free society that is manifested in him. He who claims freedom of conscience as a civic right can claim freedom only for the conscience of the free society to be operative in him.

That is the function of the individual conscience in the free society: to utter the conscience of the free society when the political organs and instruments of its conscience fail, or to express it in act in provinces of the life of society to which they have not penetrated. The individual conscience in the free society is the individualized conscience of the free society; and should be consciously what in fact it is. The purely individual conscience is an anachronism and a non-entity. Its experience is purely subjective, and is akin to hallucination. For, as we have seen, the free society was created by the endeavour to establish the milieu in which the individual conscience could exist. In that process both society and the individual consciences were changed; society was moralized, and the individual conscience was socialized; and, of late, with extreme rapidity in Britain. This process of bringing down to earth the dream of freedom of conscience for all could be finally perfected only when the free society could no longer

buy its earthly salvation on the cheap, by sheltering in its island and using its industrial supremacy to build a fleet which kept the world in awe and enabled it to dispense with any but a volunteer army. 1914 was the beginning of the end of that Elysium of commercial prosperity and moral illusion. Since then the free society has been brought down to brass tacks, and has discovered that freedom of conscience depends upon military conscription. That is not an obvious contradiction, but a profound truth: not a permanent truth, thank God, but a real indication of the present status of the individual conscience, and of the nature of the crisis of the free society. When that has finally penetrated, the free conscience whose social existence depends upon military conscription will make it its chief concern to ensure that the free society in arms shall fight only in a cause that is worthy of itself, and for the last time. And conscientious objection to military service will be recognised for what it has in fact become—a mode of registering oneself for non-combatant service to the free society in arms.

There is no reason why the free society should not permit this voluntary choice of non-combatant service to the nation in arms to continue. It avoids unnecessary friction, and does not in any way impede the working of the war-machine, of which the combatant service is only a fractional part, and no more necessary to the nation than the non-combatant and productive services on which the combatant services depend. But it does not need to be demonstrated that conscientious objection to military service which takes this form is essentially illusory. It is a transparent mode of self-deception if the conscientious objector believes he is making a significant protest against war. If however he knows what he is doing, a real exercise of the moral judgment, and a real effort of self-examination are required of him. Is he merely avoiding peril—saving his own skin, like those of his fellow-citizens who take refuge in civilian “essential work” without making any palaver about conscience—or is he genuinely prepared to accept danger and discomfort to preserve the free society which allows him to exercise his conscience?

Quite without deliberation, acting with an instinctive rightness, the Parliament of the free society of Britain, responsive to its own conscience bidding it act with respect for conscience, thrust the conscientious objector to military service into this moral dilemma. Thereby, it has practically paralysed pacifism as a political movement, by deeply dividing it. For only those conscientious objectors who have endured the spiritual travail of this self-questioning have any claim to be worthy citizens of the free society. The rest are either ignorant and self-conceited fanatics, if they are unaware of their true position in society; or, if they are aware of it, and yet avoid the spiritual travail that it demands, they are ignominious—cowards conscious of their cowardice. But if they do accept the burden of full awareness, they either renounce their pacifism, as many of the finest young pacifists have done, or they feel themselves in duty bound to discover modes of pioneer service to the free society which involve them in hardship comparably onerous with combatant service. Thus the consequence of the conscience of the free society "making provision" for the conscience of conscientious objectors has been, that large numbers of them have discredited themselves, in others' eyes and their own, while those who have not are divided between those who have explicitly renounced their pacifism, and those who have whole-heartedly sought for a genuine moral equivalent for combatant service. These two elements comprehend one another, because they both manifest the workings of a conscience which is consciousness.

This disintegration of the pacifist movement (which I have witnessed at close quarters) has been a significant and creative process. A creative process is always a "creation and destroying." Much *soi-disant* "conscience" has been revealed by it as retarded moral development; much as ignominious self-preservation: what has been impressive and valid in it has been either the renunciation of it, or the determination to discover a moral equivalent for combatant service. These two manifestations have been equally valid and full of mutual understanding, because of the authentic spiritual travail of which they were the outcome. This

spiritual travail has become the note of authentic pacifism : not certainty, but uncertainty. And this uncertainty is not and cannot be finally resolved. The best pacifists of the younger generation (who alone count, for they alone are subject to the demand for service) are at once divided, and not divided, by the fact that some renounce it, and some do not ; some seek to serve the free society in arms, some by the discovery of morally equivalent service. What both repudiate is the old comfortable contention that pacifists truly serve the free society merely by being pacifists.

In other words, pacifism has reached the point where the renunciation of pacifism is regarded by the sincerest pacifists as an equally authentic manifestation of the will to peace with their own. Which is as it should be, for those are indeed equally valid manifestations of conscience in the free society. What validates them is the quality and intensity of the spiritual travail which precedes these decisions ; and that makes entirely irrelevant the terms of the pledge which has united the most comprehensive organisation of pacifists : "I renounce war and will never support or sanction another." The spirit of pacifism—a radical protest against war as an activity incompatible with the human conscience, and therefore destructive of the free society—can no longer live within the confines of such a pledge. It is not that the spirit which prompted the signing of such a pledge was mistaken, or the protest misconceived. War *is* an activity incompatible with the human conscience and destructive of the free society : still more, infinitely more, incompatible and destructive in 1947 than it was in 1937. But, precisely because that is true, what matters is not to renounce war, but to abolish it. And to assert or imply that the only way or the best way to abolish war is for individuals to renounce it is to assert or imply what is not true ; and what, if it were true, would induce complete despair.

That is because the individual in modern society is not real, not ultimate. To pretend that he is is to beself-delude. But, in the free society, the individual preserves more reality, more ultimacy, than it is possible for him to preserve in any other form of contemporary society. The free

society has been created for that sole purpose—to enable the individual to be as real as he can be in any society that can exist as a society. That it does, and because it does that it is infinitely precious. Because it is infinitely precious, we must have no illusions about it. It does not, because it cannot, bestow complete reality on the individual, or complete validity upon the individual conscience. But all the reality it takes from him, it gives back to him again in a new form. Since his reality is his conscience, whereby he is a moral being and lives a human life, it takes part of his conscience away from him, only to give it back to him in a new form—in the form of the conscience of the free society itself. In that conscience he participates.

The conscience of the free society cannot say “I renounce war, and will never support or sanction another.” To dream that it can is foolishness. It is to dream that the free society can say: “I will enter the new Jerusalem.” It cannot say it, because it knows itself too well. It knows it is not fit to enter the new Jerusalem. If only those who, as individuals, are so convinced that they are fit to enter it, would learn something of the honesty and humility of the free society! The conscience of the free society is consciousness, not self-conceit. But what it can say, and what it must say, as it declines to enter the new Jerusalem, is: “But what I can do and what I will do, God helping me, is to abolish war; or I will perish in the attempt. I can do this, and I will do it, because I must do it: for if I do not abolish war, war will abolish me.”

In the resolve to be prepared to make war in order to abolish war, that is, to universalise the free society by establishing a free society of nations, the conscience of the free society acts in obedience to its own law. In refusing to make war for any other purpose whatsoever it acts in obedience to its own law. War for any other purpose than this is an outrage to the conscience and the principles of the free society. Hence the moral malaise which was already conspicuous in the war of 1914-18, and which became more profound in the war of 1939-45. For the purposes with which the free society fought were clouded, mixed and ambiguous: so mixed that cynics

could plausibly maintain that in the first war we were fighting to destroy a trade competitor, and in the second to annihilate a novel and threatening economic system. In the main, in both wars, Britain was fighting to preserve her own free society and to universalise it; but she was inadequately conscious of her purpose. It asserted itself, still somewhat confusedly, after both wars: 'in the widespread enthusiasm for the League of Nations, in the ten years after 1918, and in the eager support given by Parliament to the official declaration in 1946 by Mr. Bevin that Britain would gladly enter a world-parliament of the nations, and, pending that, would make the United Nations the basis of her policy. These are the instinctive gropings of the conscience of the free society of Britain towards a policy—or rather *the* policy—that is congruous with itself. But in the latter case they follow, and have to struggle with the consequences of, the complete lapse from conscience which engendered the policy of "unconditional surrender."

The obvious contamination of purpose in the wars waged by the free society, its almost cynical refusal to meet the obligations it had undertaken to the League of Nations, the moral blindness it displayed in condoning Mussolini's and Hitler's determined lawlessness drove many people after serious inward conflict and prolonged hesitation, to the pacifist position. But once there, they were immediately confronted with the moral dilemma inherent in political pacifism. Mr. Neville Chamberlain was pursuing a pacifist policy, so called: of appeasement of Hitler, by the sacrifice of the free society of Czechoslovakia. Could pacifism, without a contamination, in its own way as sordid as Mr. Chamberlain's, of the purpose of the free society of Britain, identify itself with and applaud those policies? To some pacifists it was self-evident that it could not; and they quickly reached the conclusion that pacifism is essentially "beyond politics," and that political pacifism is a monstrous hybrid, which spawns moral duplicity. The only "policy" that pacifists could honestly and honourably pursue was the domestic work of "creating cells of a society of peace."

With this book, which is the first-fruits of my continuous thinking during the war, I discard my pacifism,

and deliberately enter the political arena, in the hope that I may persuade my countrymen to make their political purposes completely unambiguous, and make it plain to all the world that they will contemplate war for one purpose and one purpose only, which they will declare with absolute clarity and from which they will not deviate: the abolition of war, in the only way war can be abolished, by the establishment of a free society of nations. Once that purpose is declared, in those simple terms, clarified of all the ambiguities that must be involved in a confusion of this purpose with support for the United Nations, which is not, and cannot become, without a revolutionary change, a free society of nations, neither can it abolish war—then the free society of Britain becomes what, I am convinced, it must become, or perish: completely obedient to its own conscience.

With that the dilemma of contemporary pacifism is ended. The conscience of the free society and the conscience of the most conscious individuals within it will be at one, and will be one. For the effort of conscience, dictated by its own being, is towards a society without war, which is a society whose members are knit together by obedience to the moral law recognised by all. This moral law is formulated as positive law by the working of the political institutions of the free society, and is subject to continual amendment and definition as conscience more thoroughly pervades society and becomes more fully conscious, in individual persons, of its own purposes. The abolition of war, in the form of internal violence, by general consent and the supersession of it by justice, determined by the conscience of society, declaring itself by its political organs, and safeguarded from more than temporary distortion by the moral law which demands that the minority be free to become the majority, is the necessary condition of the existence of the free society. Under the compulsion of the same moral law the free society is bound to strive for the abolition of war, and its supersession by justice between the nations. That is the categorical imperative which must shape the foreign policy of a free society.

The free society should have no doubt as to what justice between the nations actually is. It is not at all a remote and Utopian conception. Justice between the nations is precisely what the free society of nations, established by the abolition of war, determines to be just. And the first demand of justice is that which justice makes in order that it may create itself incessantly in the future, through the instrumentality of the appropriate political institutions of the free society of nations—namely, the abolition of war. Then, and then only, does the moral life become possible between the nations, which become members of one another through their voluntary submission to the moral law, which forbids war.

Thus the content of the moral law is absolutely simple. Abolish war! This primary content of the moral law is the same for the free society of citizens or the free society of nations. Nothing else matters, for everything else is contained in it, and the Good will be progressively revealed in the free society of nations, as it has been in the free society of citizens, once that imperative has been obeyed. The international life of the nations would pass, by their obedience to this simple imperative, from anarchy and pandemonium, into the moral order. The moral order is not Utopia, though, in comparison with what the nations now endure, it may seem most blessed. The moral life, of individuals, of free societies (in which alone it is now possible), of the free society of nations (which will gradually but inevitably become the free society of free societies) is a life of tensions and incessant moral choices; but it moves towards a goal, of greater freedom and greater responsibility in the lives of men. And this goal is not remote; it is achieved from day to day and year to year. No doubt its perfect attainment is some far-off divine event which may be imagined as the final vanishing of the moral law in the reality of love: what Christian thought has conceived as the perpetual beatitude of the Divine Vision. But that is indeed remote: the moral life of ever-increasing freedom and ever-increasing responsibility is not. The possibility of that begins, for all men in some degree, when war is abolished. For them, within every nation in the free society

of nations, conscience begins to be active, and in the free society of nations itself. The gradual exploration and revelation of justice for all men, and by all men begins.

This, I repeat, is not remote. It is already implicit, and almost explicit, in the declared policy of the greatest of the free societies—America and Britain. It needs only a little more conscience and consciousness, a little more separation from the confused and confusing manoeuvring of the United Nations, to be made simple and comprehensible to all. Against this clarification are set two forces which, though in essence utterly opposed to one another, work in effective alliance. There is the near-pacifism that always lurks near the heart of the free societies. It is the voice which whispers: "Avoid war!" instead of the imperative which commands "Abolish war!" We in the free society of Britain have lived through such an experience of the fatality that attends that equivocation that we are unlikely to be deceived by it again; but in America, which can still indulge the isolationism which for us has gone for ever, this subtle hybrid of idealism and sloth may still be persuasive. And it works in unspoken and probably unconscious alliance with the great power that is stubbornly set against this clarification. The leaders of Soviet Russia desire nothing more ardently than to avoid war—now—in order that they may make victorious war more certain hereafter. They cannot help themselves; by their philosophy, by their own position as infallible leaders, by their complete subscription to the theory and practice of the doctrine that there is and can be no justice, but only successful power, they are compelled to make war—incessant war, domestically and externally—against the free society. They are condemned to struggle, with every weapon they possess, to keep the contagion of the free society away from their dominion, for the recognition of the moral law is fatal to their philosophy and themselves. They seek to avoid war in order that the new kingdom of violence may be extended. And those who within the free societies counsel that war must at all costs be avoided, and declare that this is the moral imperative for the free societies, are working for the extension of the kingdom of violence.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ABOLITION OF WAR.

IN the false and fatal belief that it is a moral imperative upon the free societies to avoid war more than one half-truth is mixed. What reasonable person could deny that war today is an unmitigated horror? That is common ground to every human being with a spark of imagination or understanding. The question is: to what action or policy shall this horror of war compel us in the free society, where policy is controlled by conscience? The only rational answer can be: the action and policy necessary to abolish war.

But, in order to abolish war, you must be prepared in the last resort to go to war in order to do it. That contradiction appals the near-pacifist. It appals the pacifist. No wonder. It is appalling. But if you do not prepare to go to war to abolish war, which is a manifest good, you will prepare to go to war for something else, which is not. For you are not the individual you, but a member of a society. You may plead with your society, if it happens to be a free society, to make itself incapable of war by disarming completely. But even if your plea were successful, which it will not be, your society would not thereby have abolished war. Neither would it avoid war. You have no security of any sort to offer your society in return for its disarmament. It merely becomes helpless in a lawless world.

The one rational objective is to establish law in this lawless world. Then and then only, does disarmament become other than a madness; and until law has been established no nation, which is powerful enough to repel or check by war the encroachment of lawless power, will dream of disarming. To avoid war, without establishing law, is therefore merely to delay war until the encroachment of lawless power becomes insufferable, and is reacted to by an elemental explosion in which moral purpose is lost.

As a *policy*, to avoid war is meaningless. It is merely a description of what the free societies actually do. They avoid war as long as they possibly can. The *policy* of avoiding war is either a truism for the free societies ; or it means peace at any price. Peace at any price is a policy. If it is serious, it is the same as complete and unilateral disarmament. It will certainly be rejected for the entirely valid reasons given above.

But there is in the minds of many a further lurking idea : which is roughly this. If the free societies desire to avoid war, as they do, and the leaders of the Soviet Union desire to avoid war, as they also do, it is possible that by this reciprocal avoidance of war, which will be a condition of *de facto* peace, the nations may gradually as it were grow out of war. War will not be abolished, but it will cease. It will not be made impossible, but it will become impossible.

The fallacy of this argument is absolute. Both in 1914 and 1939 the free societies had been avoiding war, with all their might, for years. It availed them not at all. The war came. For, while the nations avoid war, they do not and dare not cease to prepare for war. They may reduce their preparations to "the minimum compatible with security": but the phrase has really ceased to have meaning under contemporary conditions. Security in the atomic age is a more gigantic will-o'-the-wisp than ever. As we have contended in a previous chapter, the insecurity under which men will live will be so monstrous and oppressive that the free societies will necessarily gang up against the nation which condemns them to it. They will be doing, blunderingly and confusedly, what were far better done with conscious clarity, in the form of a determination, at all costs, to abolish war. By that determination, the free societies may and probably will avoid the necessity of war ; by shrinking from that determination they will make war, humanly speaking, inevitable. And it will be a war of mere "survival."

That is, perhaps, an unnecessary repetition of a previous argument. But it serves to make clear that the moral imperative upon the free societies is to abolish war, and to establish, if necessary, by the threat of war, and even by

war itself, the free society of nations against any recalcitrant power. That is the act of conscience, today, deriving immediately from the nature of the free societies as social expressions of conscience.

There are two phases or movements in the establishment of conscience as the motive power and principle of order in the world. The first is the abolition of arbitrary violence, and the establishment of freedom of conscience within the domestic society, which sets in motion the process by which the institutions of the free society are created. This phase began with violence to abolish violence. Those who assert that violence always begets violence are denying the plain facts of history. Violence, in the English parliamentary war, begat a society of freedom in which violence was abolished. The victory for non-violence won by violence was much less certain in the French revolution, because the revolutionary violence was pushed to so bloody an extreme that the peaceful society in France has never been quite stable since. In Russia, the revolutionary objective was not the free society at all; and internal violence has reigned there ever since. But the evidence is incontrovertible that violence when limited to what is necessary to establish the free society does really achieve its end. Violence is a misleading name for force exercised for and controlled by conscience, in order to assert the moral law.

As, in the beginning of the first phase of the creation of the free society, force exercised for and controlled by conscience was the necessary means by which society began to advance into the new dimension of experience, wherein the institutions of the free society were created by slow process, and conscience gradually permeated the whole of society; so, at the beginning of the next phase, when the free society must begin to universalise itself or perish, conscientious force may be required. But if it is sufficiently conscientious, which also means sufficiently conscious, it may not, and probably will not, be necessary. That possibility, which I believe is a probability, is a mighty consolation: for he would be barely human who could contemplate without agony of spirit the use of the modern weapons of mass-destruction even for the defence and the

universalisation of the free society. Conscientious force is a comfortable and reassuring phrase ; but when it covers, as it must cover, not only the equivalent of the saturation-bombing of Germany, but of the horrors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and far worse than these, then only the absolute conviction that this may be necessary in order to abolish war can prevail against the elemental horror it awakens.

Indeed, it behoves us to be meticulously careful how we state the case. For, if we make it appear that the universalisation of the free society is the primary objective, then even as men of conscience and consciousness we are constrained to say that for this objective, precious though it is, we cannot pay the price. But that is not the primary objective. The primary objective is, and will remain, solely the abolition of war. That objective, and that objective alone, can and does justify deliberate recourse to the fearful weapons of modern war. The nation which, at this crisis in human destiny, refuses to abolish war, verily does deserve death, and war upon it is an act of criminal justice which the conscience of humanity must needs endorse.

But, precisely because this is true, it is almost impossible to believe that such a nation really exists. I myself am half-convinced that such a nation does not exist. I cannot persuade myself that Soviet Russia is such a nation, and that the Russian people will refuse to co-operate with the free societies in abolishing war. But I have come to believe that the leaders and autocrats of the Russian people will refuse, unless and until they are compelled by the Russian people, to co-operate in abolishing war. The moment that the leaders of Soviet Russia are compelled by the Russian people to co-operate in abolishing war, Russia will be set on the road to the free society. What her subsequent destiny will be, what institutions she will create as she develops her new freedom—it would be foolish to conjecture. They will be worthy of a great people, and of the glorious new era when war has been abolished.

This, then, should be the clear objective of the policy of the free societies, to induce the Russian people to compel their leaders to co-operate with them in abolishing war. The first essential for this task is to have a perfectly clear

idea of how to abolish war. That, I hope, has been sufficiently demonstrated in the course of the previous chapters. Only by the establishment of a free society of nations can war be abolished, because an organ must be created to declare and enforce justice, if the arbitrament of war—as the decider of “justice”—is to be abolished. This is absolutely necessary, and its necessity can be ignored only by those who ignore the positive purpose served by war in international relations. Ideally, no doubt, this organ of world-justice should be a parliament of all the nations; but, as we have seen in the history of the creation of the domestic free society, ideal perfection is a thing of slow growth, and it would be extravagant to object, on perfectionist grounds, to the organ of world-justice being limited, at first, to the “great powers.” What is imperative is that they should agree among themselves to be a free society, establishing what is just by the principles of the free society, the minority accepting the decision of the majority.

That this necessitates the abolition of the veto-principle is obvious, though it is important not to confuse this necessary abolition of the veto-principle with the demand that the Veto should be immediately abolished on the existing Security Council of the United Nations. Unanimity *may* be attainable in the effort to create an authority which shall promulgate and enforce world-justice. As we have seen, the proposed Atomic Authority would be, or would inevitably become, such an authority. If it were superior in authority and power to the Security Council itself, the necessary purpose would be served. But its operations must not be subject to the Veto. In other words, the conditions on which the Veto can be allowed to the Security Council is that it is used to secure unanimity for the creation of a world-authority, superior to itself, whose decisions and acts shall not be subject to the Veto. If the Security Council is a sort of constituent assembly for the creation of an effective world-authority which will supersede itself, then the unanimity which the Veto secures, if possible, is desirable; but if the Security Council itself remains the supreme world-authority, then the abolition of the Veto is absolutely necessary.

It is urgent that the issue shall be clarified, because the main objective of the policy of the free societies is to drive home, by every possible means, to the people of Russia that the question is: Whether they will, or will not, co-operate with the peoples of the free societies to abolish war? If they wish to do so, then either the Veto on the present Security Council must be abolished, or a new world-authority must be created for which the Veto does not exist. There is good reason for believing that the leaders of Soviet Russia are sedulously confusing the mind of the people of Russia on this very point, and have long been seeking to persuade them that the prestige, the power and the very existence of Russia depend on the preservation of the Veto, very much as, during the 19th century, the American people were persuaded that the prestige, the power, and the very existence of the United States depended upon their adherence to the Munroe doctrine. Were this the 19th century, the comparison would be apt, and consoling. But it is the atomic age, in which the isolation possible in the 19th century is an evil anachronism. No great power can now be allowed the luxury and privilege of isolation, or be allowed to build up a sphere of security into which the necessary world authority may not penetrate. Any great power which insists on doing so, today, becomes the enemy of the human race. In so far as the leaders of Soviet Russia are seeking to persuade the Russian people that their prestige, their existence and their security depend upon the maintenance of the Veto, they are seeking to persuade them to become enemies of the human race.

This must be made clear to the Russian people. The fact that it is inordinately difficult to make anything clear to the Russian people must not deter us from the effort. Quite the contrary. For the appalling difficulty of communicating with the Russian people is deliberately created by the leaders of Soviet Russia; and it is this rigorously enforced effort to hold the Russian people *incommunicado* by an elaborate apparatus of indoctrination and terrorism which is, in the last analysis, the greatest menace to civilization today. If that effort could be defeated, if the apparatus of indoctrination and terrorism on which it relies could

be broken down or disintegrated, the chances of abolishing war without recourse to war would be immeasurably increased. Every resource of imagination and inventiveness must therefore be directed to this end. When the importance of attaining it is clearly conceived, the nature of the underlying issue becomes apparent. The real forces in conflict are those of conscience and anti-conscience, between those that make for the expansion and universalization of conscience and those that seek the annihilation of conscience.

For the systematic effort of the leaders of Russia to prevent the people of Russia from forming their own judgment on the vital moral issues which now confront humanity—an effort backed by an apparatus of terrorism more formidable than that which existed in Nazi Germany—is nothing else than a systematic effort to annihilate conscience in the Russian people, and exterminate it from Russian society. That effort, as we have previously shown, is entirely logical. It follows from the postulate adopted from Marxism, with a fanatical rigour, by Lenin: that the moral conscience is entirely illusory and is merely an appearance produced by the mechanisms of production. Change, by sheer force of the state, as soon as you can seize it, the social mechanism of production, and the moral conscience will change accordingly; it will eventually become an instinct of obedience to the new mechanism of production. During the period of transition, vestiges of conscience may persist: they will be regarded as stavistic bourgeois prejudices, to be eradicated by indoctrination and terror. There is but one "truth": that which tends to the perpetuation of the Soviet system. Which means, of course, that there is no truth: there is merely the propaganda which the infallible leadership of Soviet Russia incessantly pours forth in order to uphold the Soviet system.

The system, when soberly considered, is so inhuman as to be incredible. It is this inherent incredibility of the Soviet system which makes it so difficult for the free societies to realize the menace it contains. It is literally true that we cannot imagine a society from which the moral conscience has been exterminated. We are compelled to

assume that in Soviet Russia the moral conscience is merely repressed and suppressed by an altogether novel combination of indoctrination and terrorism. That both these actually exist we know; and we think we are entitled to deduce from them that the moral conscience of the Russian people does still exist. Otherwise, why is this formidable apparatus of repression necessary? So we argue, and perhaps we are right. But the real basis of any conviction (as distinct from a comforting opinion) that we are right, is a faith in the nature of man, and in particular, a faith that the moral conscience of man cannot be annihilated.

CHAPTER XVIII

IS CONSCIENCE ANNIHILABLE?

Is the faith that the moral conscience of man cannot be annihilated a grounded faith? It may be impossible to annihilate it for ever. But that is not the question which now concerns us. The question is: Is it true that the moral conscience of man cannot be annihilated for a generation or two—long enough to kill the hope of the response that can alone save humanity from post-atomic war?

Does not the evidence which has come to light in the shattered remains of Nazi Germany point rather to the fact that the moral conscience can be annihilated? The indoctrination of Nazi Germany was not so subtle, nor was it conducted so long, as the indoctrination of the Russian people, and the system of internal violence was certainly not more effective in Germany than in Russia; yet the results achieved were formidable. May not the results in Russia be more impressive still? Nor is it to be forgotten that a parallel process is at work in the free societies themselves, where the apparatus of evangelistic terrorism does not exist, and indoctrination is voluntarily received. Even in them, wholly against the grain of the environment, a considerable section of the people has been converted to the doctrine that the moral conscience does not exist, and has become consubstantial with the new social organism in which conscience is annihilated. For these men and women, the only right and the only truth is whatever tends to the perpetuation and expansion of the Soviet system. Moreover, quite apart from the conscious repudiation of conscience which is represented by Communism, which is fairly strong, and Fascism, which is weak, in the free societies, there are signs of an increasing unconscious repudiation of conscience. The demand for unconditional surrender, saturation bombing, and, above all, the dropping of atomic bombs on the two cities of Japan, without warning

and without offering the Japanese the chance to surrender, are indications that the hold of conscience is precarious and is weakening even in the average mind of the free society. Perhaps it is unjust to insist on these things, for the mind of the free society has difficulty in thinking clearly in time of total war, which is an activity profoundly alien to it, and in which it easily loses its moral bearings.

But, on the whole, the evidence is that, under pressure of systematic and unlimited violence applied to that end, the moral conscience can be virtually annihilated for a considerable period within a society. By systematic and sustained persecution, and physical elimination, the mediæval Church did succeed in annihilating its heretics. Assuredly, the apparatus of repression at the command of the leaders of Soviet Russia is immeasurably more efficient than that of the mediæval Church; and it is at least legitimate to ask whether the Russian people may not have been already so conditioned by indoctrination and violence that they are incapable of responding to a moral challenge, supposing means could be found of addressing it to them.

It would obviously be presumptuous to attempt an answer to this question. But that it has to be asked brings us to a clearer notion of the magnitude of the problem, and the incommensurability of the crisis which confronts mankind. It also shows the imperative necessity of putting the question to the test as soon as possible. If the free societies were to spend on "propaganda" to the Russian people as much as they will spend on the preparation for the war which will become much more probable if their "propaganda" fails, they would be showing a just appreciation of the nature of the human crisis, and the peril which menaces the free society.

I have put the word "propaganda" in inverted commas, for it cannot be admitted for one moment that the effort to put the fundamental issue of morality before the Russian people; and to reawaken its conscience, if it is half-obliterated, is of the same kind as the continuous propaganda made to the free societies by Soviet Russia and the Communists *in partibus infidelium*. To assert that they are the same in kind, as is constantly asserted by the corrupt "clerks"

and "fellow-travellers" in the free societies, is to surrender the inmost citadel: the reality and validity of conscience. But, though this cannot be admitted, it is important to realize that in the closed system of the convinced Communist—and such we must imagine the leaders and the Party in Russia—the unreality of conscience is as self-evident and axiomatic as is its reality for a conscious and responsible member of the free society. To the convinced Communist in Russia the sincerest effort of the free societies to awaken the conscience of the Russian people, to enlist its support for the abolition of war as a moral outrage to the conscience of humanity, will appear as monstrous humbug designed for one sole purpose: to infect Soviet Russia with heresy and thus to disintegrate the new social organism. It is not easy for the member of the free societies to get that grim truth into his head: any more than it is easy for the naïve business-man of the United States, who is the favoured agent of American diplomacy to Soviet Russia, to realize that the ease he finds in "talking turkey" with the Soviet high-ups is an indication of their common moral cynicism.

Business has no conscience, as the saying goes. And because this is true, there is a danger that successful business relations between the free society (of the United States in particular) and Soviet Russia may be twisted into evidence that good relations with Russia are possible: that because Soviet Russia keeps her word in a commercial bargain, and pays her debts, she is trustworthy in political relations. This heresy—for it is nothing less—is particularly conspicuous in the arguments of Mr. Henry Wallace. It consists in confusing the outward show of morality with its inward essence. Russia pays her commercial debts scrupulously because she needs—to a very limited extent, indeed, but to that limited extent the need is pressing—to trade with the outer world. If she did not pay her debts, that essential trade would cease. As soon as Soviet Russia no longer needs to trade with the outer world, she will neither pay her debts, nor incur any.

There is nothing wrong in that; but what is wrong is the idea, which is still powerful in the American mind, as it

used to be in the British, that trade-relations unite the world—in the moral sense of unity. It is the wildest fantasy to imagine that Soviet Russia will open herself more and more to these pseudo-ethical trade relations and so become a trustworthy member of the international society. Soviet Russia permits herself, to an extremely limited extent, trade relations with the outer world precisely because such relations *are* morally neutral. And all the relations she does permit must be morally neutral. The “cultural relations” of which so much fuss is made are morally sterilized and morally sterile. For how are genuine cultural relations possible between the outer world and a people with whom none save official communication is possible? The Dynamo Football team visits this country not to indulge in the camaraderie or risk the hazards of sport—in which a great deal of English morality is expressed—but as a hermetically sealed delegation to demonstrate Russian “football power.” In similar fashion Russian diplomats are permanently on their guard against being inveigled (as they would put it) into the frank and informal conversations which make compromise possible. These peculiarities are often regarded as curious idiosyncrasies, manifestations of an uncouthness or gaucherie that will wear off when the Soviets get accustomed to the club, so to speak. That is a fallacy, for it is based on the instinctive belief that, after all, the Russians and ourselves are at bottom the same kind of human beings. That may or may not be true of the Russian people: even in their case the doubt is more serious than one can entertain without a positive mental effort. But it is certainly untrue of the Russians who are permitted to represent their country abroad. There is, between them and the representatives of the free society, a cultural and moral abyss.

Once more, it is very difficult to adjust our minds, which take the fact of conscience for granted, and our instincts, which are intimately connected with the conscience that pervades the free society, to the reality of a society of which the leaders regard the idea of conscience at once as an obsolete superstition and a pestilential heresy, and its manifestations and activities as positively evil. Indifference

to conscience is understandable. There are plenty of members of the free society who are, as individuals, indifferent to it themselves. But the leaders of Soviet Russia are not indifferent to conscience. They hold it to be the Enemy itself: an illusion, doubtless, but an illusion with which it is dangerous to take liberties, and which must be harned out of existence.

We are more or less accustomed to a view of Soviet Russia which looks upon it, rather hazily, as a country which at a critical moment said "Evil, be thou my Good!" But the view itself was never sharp and clear, because it was blurred by the moral optimism which is, after all, fundamental to the free societies. In effect, we said to ourselves: "That's a pretty bad start; but they can't go on like that. Sooner or later they'll come to their senses and apply to join the club." When Hitler finally attacked Russia, they were promptly elected honorary members, by acclamation. They must be pukka: Hitler was attacking them. With a rapidity astonishing only to those who were not prepared for it, Soviet Russia has shown that she is not pukka at all. That has been bewildering, particularly for a people so strangely unconscious of its own moral presuppositions as the English, yet so radically averse to any conscious moral nihilism. But more bewildering still would be the realization that Soviet Russia, in her own estimation, is not the Satan who fell from the heaven of the free society, but herself the incarnation of the Good or rather—since that is really much too clubbable, seeing that the idea of the Good itself suggests common ground—a necessarily triumphant power whose historical mission it is to expunge the idea of the Good from the human consciousness. Not "Evil, be thou my good!" is the sign in which Soviet Russia seeks to conquer. But "Good, be thou my evil!" There is a difference.

How far into the human fabric of the Russian people this annihilation of the conscience (which is the consciousness of good and evil and the feeling that it is obligatory to choose the good) has penetrated, it is quite impossible to determine. But those who obstinately reject the idea that it can have gone very far, because such a process cannot

go very far, should bethink themselves on what ground their instinctive confidence is based. It is because they hold it for a fundamental truth that human nature is decent and cannot be radically changed. In other words, you cannot kill the conscience of man. It is, in fact, unannihilable.

Once more we must ask: Can we be sure of that? Is it not, much rather, what the Communists would call "a bourgeois illusion"—that is, an axiom taken for granted by members of the free societies? Is not conscience a faculty of moral discrimination which has developed very slowly in the human race, and only come to flower in a very particular social and political environment which it has gradually created for itself? Is it not in fact a very tender plant indeed, threatened with decay even in the congenial climate of the free society itself, and impossible to maintain alive in the rigours of a totalitarian Communist society?

One broods and broods over this strange and terrifying question. It is impossible to answer it. But to refuse to admit that it is a question at all, to proclaim a blithe confidence that conscience is unannihilable, in view of the experience of the past thirty years, is an act not of faith, but of superstition. I am not so sanguine of the continued existence of conscience even within the free society itself that I can dismiss the possibility of its utter abolition in a Communist totalitarian society, however fantastic it may sound. Since I sincerely believe that conscience will decay within the free society unless a conscious and determined effort is made to keep it alive, I cannot dismiss as fantasy the idea that in a society in which the power of the state is greater than in any other, and in which it is deliberately directed to the annihilation of conscience, conscience has largely perished.

I see no reason, either in what I understand of the process of history or in the experience of the last thirty years, why this should not be so. New modes of human existence are coming into being. It is one of the purposes of this book to demonstrate that the free society itself is one such new mode of human existence—the society that lives, and can only live, by conscience. It is equally the

purpose of this book to demonstrate that in the totalitarian society of Communism another new mode of human existence is coming into being. What those two modes of existence have in common is as significant as their opposition. In them both society dominates the individual; in both the preponderant reality of the individual—his centre of gravity, so to speak—is shifted from himself to the society to which he belongs; and in both cases is demonstrated the element of truth in the Marxist thesis that “the human essence lies in the complex of social relations.” What is vitally important in this moment of crucial change when, owing to the ever-increasing economic integration of society, society absorbs more and more of the individual, is that the social relations shall themselves be moralized: that, as the individual loses some of his responsibility, he should know himself to be a member of a society which is becoming more responsible. And this is not Utopian. It does not really imply that the individual is fictitiously compensated for a positive loss of responsibility by an imaginary participation in a responsibility that is abstract. It means that there must be a new experience of responsibility, felt in the individual towards the whole of society.

There are two, and only two, modes of this new social existence of man. The movement into the new dimension of social existence is irreversible: it could be stopped only if the technological advances of the last fifty years could be abolished and future advance forbidden. Since that is impossible, the increasing economic integration of society is a certain destiny. It can be met in one of two ways: either by a steadily increasing diffusion of power and responsibility throughout society, or by a steadily increasing concentration of power in irresponsible hands. But why, it may be asked, in the second case, are the hands irresponsible? Because they cannot be responsible. Not merely because “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”; but because no criterion of responsibility exists. Responsibility consists precisely in the determination to share it as widely as it can be shared—even more widely than it can be quite safely shared—in order

that new responsible persons may be created. That is the only responsible use of power within a society.

Responsible power diffused through the whole of society, that knows itself fallible; irresponsible power, purporting to be infallible, dominating the whole of society—these are the two forms, one of which the new social existence of man must take. The former involves a steady heightening of consciousness and conscience throughout society till they, in an increasing number of people, become identical; while the latter involves a steady diminution of both.

How far the latter process has gone in Russia there is no means of knowing: neither can one say, for certain, that the process is self-defeating, at any rate within a reasonable time. There is good reason to believe that, as we have suggested, the advance of technology itself depends upon the vitality of conscience and the existence of the free society. And that may mean, as Bertrand Russell has lately argued, that the free societies will retain their superiority in war-potential. If that be so, even the "infallible" rulers of Russia will sooner or later be compelled to withdraw their refusal to abolish war. But humanity cannot endure a long period during which these profounder factors work themselves out. The problem is to abolish war within the next few years, in order that humanity may be spared the incalculable consequences of living under its shadow, and the free societies the compulsions which it will put on them. The question we are asking is: What are the chances of persuading the Russian people to compel their rulers to co-operate with the free societies in abolishing war? And the answer is that they are not so rosy as they might seem to be. Not only is the apparatus of repression which the Russian rulers possess very formidable; but it is quite possible that the actual faculty of conscience in the Russian people may have been profoundly weakened, however strange that may seem to a member of a free society. Nevertheless, if that is so, it is still more obviously the duty of the free societies to spare no effort in seeking to appeal to whatever remains of the conscience of the Russian people.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PRIMACY OF THE POLITICAL

HUMANITY has entered a new kind of social existence. This new kind of social existence, we said, is equally manifest in the free society and the totalitarian society of today. What they have in common is almost as important and significant as their radical antithesis. This point may easily be missed by those who justly emphasize the absolute opposition which exists between the free society and Communism; and it may be deliberately ignored. To use the Marxist terminology, the free society that is now on the brink of a new order of experience is no longer a "bourgeois society." Though it is continuous with "bourgeois society" (and this continuity is of vital importance, because it is a moral achievement won by the universal rejection of internal violence within the society) it is of a totally different kind from "bourgeois society." "Bourgeois society" is individualistic and atomistic; the new free society is not.

The link between these two phases of the free society—its "bourgeois" phase and its "socialist" phase—is to be found in conscience, which advances from the condition of an individualistic and atomistic conscience to a condition in which conscience knows itself to be objectified in the political institutions of the free society.

The objectification of conscience in the political institutions of the free society is not exhaustive. The member of the free society does not—as it were in a new Rousseau "social contract"—entirely surrender his conscience to the free society, because his conscience is the source whence the free society and its institutions derive their vitality. But his conscience works with a new sense of voluntary self-limitation; it cannot, without self-contradiction, desire or will action that will impair the self-preservation of the free society, because it is the form of society which, in the highest possible degree, permits the expression of con-

science in its activities. This expression of conscience in the free society can be described as the continuous objectification of conscience in new social institutions or the re-fashioning of old ones. The decisive manifestation of conscience in the free society is political.

When, in the framework of the "bourgeois society," political equality has been achieved for all adult members of society, under the limiting condition of the moral law that the minority has full freedom to become the majority, then "bourgeois society" is transformed into something essentially different from its former self. I have been content to call it "the free society," and that seems the best name for it, partly because it depends upon certain fundamental freedoms which were established in "bourgeois society," and partly because "the free society" is now free to transform the whole structure of "bourgeois society" with the exception of those fundamental freedoms. They are the safeguard of the free society, by which it remains the social expression of conscience and not of arbitrary will.

That disposes of the modern heresy that the political is consequential and not primary. That heresy takes many forms other than Communist orthodoxy; and it is particularly liable to infect the academic mind which prides itself on its objectivity, and the theological mind which imagines it can participate in the impassivity of God and condescend to the "relativities of history." The essence of the free society lies precisely in the affirmation that the political is primary and not consequential. The free society is the free society because it affirms this: it is not a constataction, but an affirmation. In affirming that the political is primary and not consequential, the free society wills its own existence; and the academic and theological minds within the free society which do not consciously participate in and subscribe to this affirmation are guilty of lawlessness. They are guilty too, even by their own standards, of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the nature of human existence, and in particular the nature of the moral life. The moral life, which is the purpose of human existence, is not something which exists, but something which has to be positively willed into existence by men. So with the free society, in

which society as a whole enters upon the moral life, in the new dimension: its existence has to be positively willed. And the theoretical form taken by this positive willing of its own continued existence by the free society is the affirmation of the primacy of the political.

Of course, the political is primary only within the free society. If we are seeking a true description of other forms of society, it will obviously be untrue to say of them that the political is primary; and in some of them the political may be consequential upon the economic, or the religious. But to fail to understand that it is of the essence of the free society that there shall be political equality within it, and that this political equality shall be maintained by the preservation of fundamental freedoms, is to be ignorant indeed. Nor does it affect the truth of this in any way if, in a given case of the free society, it was the economic power of the working-class which enabled or helped it to achieve political equality. If that was done by peaceful means, as it was in Britain, it only goes to show that the ruling class was largely persuaded of the moral justice of the workers' claim to political equality. But, in fact, the political emancipation of the working-class in Britain was claimed and yielded primarily on moral grounds. No doubt economic factors entered into the process, but they entered into it in the main indirectly. For example, the concentration of workers in industrial centres enabled them to exert influence in Parliament long before the universal and equal franchise was introduced. But, even if political equality had been won by a direct and open assertion of the workers' economic power, still it would be true that, the moment they had attained political equality, the primacy of the political would have had to be asserted and maintained if the society was to be a free society. In such a case, it would be admittedly more difficult to maintain the free society, because this would depend upon the workers having a higher standard of morality than that of the ruling classes, whose refusal to grant political equality was the cause of the workers having recourse to economic power to obtain it. The temptation would be great for the workers to retaliate in kind, and to establish themselves in turn as a privileged ruling class and

bar their predecessors from political equality. But by so doing, they would have failed to establish the free society, they would merely have established "the dictatorship of the proletariat."

As far as I can judge from his writings this is what Karl Marx imagined might happen in England. The working-class would extort political equality by organizing its economic power; having attained political power, it would then "by peaceful and legal means" exert its sovereignty in perpetuity. That is a theoretical possibility at the present time in this country. If it were to happen, while the fundamental freedoms were maintained, it would be a legitimate expression of the free society. But it would be, I think, a very improbable one. On the other hand, if the working-class were to use its new political power to abolish the fundamental freedoms, or to disfranchise its opponents—as some socialist theoreticians have urged it to do—it would destroy the free society. It might do so "legally"; but it could hardly hope to do so "peacefully." And the rebellion which would undoubtedly ensue would not, as Marx suggested, be "a pro-slavery rebellion," but a rebellion to vindicate and re-establish freedom against a tyranny—albeit the tyranny of a legally elected majority government.

Thus, political freedom is the source and indispensable condition of all authentic social freedoms. Whether or not that is an absolute and universal truth (as I believe it to be) it is indisputably the axiom on which the free society is builded. To recognize and emphasize that fundamental truth, to set it forth again quite clearly, purified of the insidious qualifications with which fellow-travellers and criminous clerks are busy whittling it away, does not involve us in maintaining that a would-be free society is bound to allow political freedom to those who would, if they achieved power, deny it to others. That fallacy has been sufficiently exposed in earlier chapters. But what does follow from it is that any society in which the institutions of the free society are adopted, but the "revolutionary party of the working-class" disfranchises its opponents, is not and, without another revolution will not become, a free society. It is to be admitted that where the habit of toleration does not

exist it is exceedingly difficult to establish the free society ; but that is no excuse for pretending that something which is the antithesis of the free society is a free society. To establish a free society in such conditions will be indubitably an arduous task : it can only be done by a government which, believing in the free society, is convinced of the necessity of refusing to tolerate the intolerant, and possesses the power to repress them with even-handed justice, both on the Right and on the Left.

To return to our thesis that in the free society the bourgeois society is transformed. Into what is it transformed ? It is tempting to say that it is transformed into a "socialist" society as distinct from and opposed to a "communist" society. But that is not true. It has yet to be determined with how much "socialism" the continued existence of a free society is compatible—or, for that matter, with how much "capitalism." The free society itself determines that. Or, to put it in another way, one of the chief functions of the free society at the present time is to discover the valid content of this highly ambiguous and emotive word, "socialism." "Socialism," very definitely in England, and to some extent all over the world, is felt to be essentially different and opposed to Communism ; but if the attempt is made to distinguish between them in economic terms it invariably fails—of necessity, because the distinction between them is political. But this political distinction has never been clearly made by socialists, because there are two separate, and irreconcilable, traditions in socialist thought : the Marxist and the ethical, or, to use Engels' words, the "scientific" and the "Utopian." They are irreconcilable, because Marx sought to eliminate the ethical will from the process of history, by depersonalizing it and identifying it with the process of history itself. For him the process of history is an unconscious "will"—conceived as German idealistic philosophy conceived "will"—moving inevitably towards Utopia : towards greater justice, greater happiness, and greater freedom : above all, greater freedom. The only occasion, in the Marxist scheme of things, when the ethical will of individuals comes clearly into play is when a member of the bourgeoisie

identifies himself with the political movement of the proletariat—an action which is in the Marxist scheme either supernaturally disinterested, or basely interested. On the other hand, the inspiration of the socialist movement in Britain has been primarily ethical, and its appeal made to the conscience of society: it has put forward a claim, to be judged *in foro conscientiae*, for social justice based on the equality of man—not as possessing equal faculties or talents, but as possessing an equal right to freedom and responsibility. Political equality has thus been always in the forefront of the demands of British socialism, not as a mere tactical prelude to the acquisition of political power by the working-class, but as a principle of permanent validity, not to be forsaken in the time of victory.

That is not to imply that British socialism has formed the clear conception, or definitely accepted the principle, that the actual content of the word "socialism" must be determined by the free society. Theory of the socialist society has played only a small part in the concerns of the British labour movement; and the few who held theories held various and contradictory ones. For the most part the blessed word "nationalization" served the turn. But the Marxist orthodoxy of the Social Democratic parties on the continent has always been markedly alien to the British labour movement, which, whether it theorized about socialism or not, was content to be primarily a political movement aiming at greater social justice for the worker within the framework of the free society. While it was quite uncertain whether it was a revolutionary party, it was quite certain that whatever social revolution was necessary in Britain must be a peaceful one. About social revolutions in other countries it was not so sure. Since it had no certain knowledge of what a socialist society really was, it has always been liable to be half-convinced that Soviet Russia was, as it claimed to be, the one socialist society in the world; yet it has always been even more strongly convinced that Communists could not be safely admitted into its own ranks, because in practice and in theory they repudiated the ethos of the free society.

It would be going too far to say that the British labour

movement is intellectually convinced that the free society is more important than Socialism itself; but it is true to say that it has always behaved as though it were. Just as, pragmatically, Mr. Ernest Bevin knows that he feels on safe ground in his dealings with the United States, simply because there is a common recognition of a moral law, so the Labour party acts in fact as though it had much more in common with the Conservative opposition than it has with the Communists who repudiate the free society. So far, at any rate, the free society has been first, the rest nowhere, in the instinctive scheme of values of British labour. And that is right.

For the free society is final in any humane scheme of values. What it may become—socialist, or semi-socialist, or demi-semi-socialist—is a matter of great interest, but quite minor importance compared with the moral necessity of its remaining a free society. That is because in the free society “bourgeois society” is transformed into a society completely permeated by, or permeable to, conscience. It now becomes an incomparable instrument for discovering what social justice really is, by discovering what a whole society in practice feels to be just; and it is able to discover and realize this concrete social justice because it has already established a relation of fundamental justice between its members: that primary relation of political equality whereby every citizen is free to express his judgment of what is good and what is bad in the action of the government which represents him. The free society is, therefore, the just society. It may, and will, contain all manner of minor injustices, which it will hope, as time goes on, patiently to correct and eliminate; and it will confidently cherish that hope, because the manifold minor injustices will never be completely hidden. There will always be freedom for the voices of those who suffer them, or those who are moved by others suffering them, to be heard. The free society is the just society, not because there is perfect justice within it, but because it is a permanent court of justice, always in session, hearkening to appeals to its conscience to alter or to adjust the existing institutions, or to re-interpret, or to extend, the existing law, in order that

it shall conform ever more closely to the demand of conscience.

The free society is final in any humane scheme of values ; but its finality is no guarantee of its everlastingness. It is the final form of society because it is the only one which is capable of discovering, and simultaneously expressing in new social relations and institutions, what justice really is—that infinitely delicate adjustment between innumerable partly just claims : above all, between man's just claim to order and his just claim to liberty. The free society is based on the reconciliation of those two apparently conflicting claims in the hearts and minds of its members. To some degree, in every loyal member of the free society the affirmation is made : " I *will* order, and I *will* freedom ; and I *will* that they shall exist in harmony." That is the content of the principle of political equality in the free society : unimpeded action by the majority, unimpeded criticism by the minority.

The free society is a great experiment—the greatest, the most crucial and the most novel, ever made by man. It has been created by the moral will of man, affirming the dignity, the freedom and responsibility of man, and his capacity to choose the good—not some refined and saintly good to be attained by self-abnegation, but a social good valid for all men in an earthly society, to be attained by self-affirmation and self-limitation. Now the experiment is to be put to a severe test in Britain. The first permeation of society by conscience—expressed in the achievement of political equality for all—has had its right and necessary consequence : the party of the workers has attained political power. Nor is there any doubt that, in the main, the political leaders of the workers have behaved with a due sense of responsibility to the free society. If, on occasion the Labour government has seemed too doctrinaire, the excess is no more than human, above all in a situation so complex and difficult as that which has followed six years of total war. On the other hand there has been no doubt of the willingness of the country as a whole to give to the Labour government the same general obedience as to any other. Politically the free society seems healthy and secure.

But, economically and industrially, it is far less secure. There is a real doubt whether the workers appreciate the necessity of dealing justly with one another or with society as a whole. They strive with the old methods and the old prejudices, appropriate to the long period when political power was largely in the hands of the employing class, for sectional advantages which are in conflict with the needs of society as a whole, as determined by their own political representatives. Their industrial representatives—the Trade Union leaders—are perhaps more than half-way to accepting their political colleagues' view of the needs of the nation; but, when they have gone only so far, they are continually deserted by the rank and file, who accuse them of ceasing to press the sectional claims of the workers as far as they might. After all, say the workers, that is what they are paid for. And that is true: they are paid to press the sectional claims of the workers regardless of the claims of the community as a whole. But they are also, of necessity, the responsible advisers of the Labour government, which is the government of the community as a whole. The two functions clash; and there is only one way by which they can be brought into harmony: that is, by the rank and file of the workers accepting as binding upon themselves the needs of the community as a whole as determined by their own political representatives.

There is a long way to go before that goal is reached; and until it is reached the free society will be perilously insecure. In the last analysis, the cause of its insecurity is the security it has promised as a matter of social justice to the workers. For that security means that the rough and ready industrial discipline enforced by the threat of unemployment is no more; and it must be replaced either by self-discipline, or by discipline imposed by the State. But these two disciplines under a Labour government in a free society are one and the same. And the chief failure of the Labour government is not to have seen clearly that, if it rejected as Utopian, as it was bound to do, the idea of direct self-discipline imposed by the workers upon themselves as individuals, it must accept the necessity of itself imposing discipline on behalf of the State, by formulating a just

pattern of wages for every industry. That is not an easy or an enviable task ; but it is a necessary one. If the pattern meets with such resistance from the workers as to be incapable of application, then it is proved that full employment in the present stage of the free society is impracticable ; and there would probably have to be a return to the former discipline by the threat of unemployment. But what is clear is that, before the free society can be regarded as reasonably secure, there is a tremendous work to be done in the way of educating the workers to their new responsibilities. Since, in a free society, there should be none but workers of various kinds, it follows that by far the most important task which a free society has to undertake and one which if it neglects, it can hardly hope to survive, is that of educating itself into the duties of the new citizenship.

CHAPTER XX

THE "PARTY" IN THE FREE SOCIETY

WE said that the new kind of social existence on the threshold of which man now stands is equally manifest in the free and the totalitarian society of today. A closer economic and social integration is inevitable in all societies based on a machine economy. It is inevitable that the member of a machine-society shall find his individual existence more and more absorbed by society itself. The vital question at issue, really, is whether the society which absorbs him shall, or shall not, be itself a moral being. If it is, as the free society is, then the process of being absorbed by society is itself a moral process, to which the individual can consent willingly with a sense of self-fulfilment. Moreover, this process, being moral, will at all times set limits to the depersonalization of the individual. Those limits are roughly defined by the fundamental freedoms, and all the subsidiary freedoms necessary to maintain them. But to maintain in effective existence these freedoms and the political institutions which they have shaped for themselves demands an almost entirely new effort at self-education by the free society. In the long run it requires no less than that the majority of members of the free society shall be active centres of conscience, positively willing the continued existence of the free society. To imagine that, because in the main, the free society has entered its final form without a widespread conscious moral effort, it can be maintained without one, is to imagine a vain thing.

True, the effort required would be vastly, indeed immeasurably, eased if war were abolished: and that is one way of re-stating the reason why the main effort of the free society must be to abolish war. But until that has been accomplished—indeed, in order to accomplish that—the effort at self-education in the free society must be such as will make an unprecedented demand on its moral resources.

A demand analogous to this singular and pressing demand for self-education is experienced and is met in the new social organism of the Communist society. By intense and unremitting propaganda, by the multifarious and all-pervasive activities of the Party members, by the incessant liquidation of every actual or potential centre of autonomous opinion, the subjects of the Communist state are not indeed educated—since that is impossible in such a society—but conditioned to give much more to the state than sheer compulsion can elicit from them. How effective is this internal propaganda, there is no means of knowing. It is perhaps significant that a quite different propaganda was found necessary in Soviet Russia during the actual war—a nationalist propaganda dwelling on the military glories of Czarist Russia—and that a return to the ideological propaganda of Communist orthodoxy has encountered difficulties.

Dictatorial compulsion and propaganda, in the Communist society; self-imposed discipline and education in the free society. The difference between them, in theory, is immense. But in practice, perhaps, it may not seem so great. For, if the Labour government in Britain had introduced an over-all regulation of wages and compulsory direction of labour, as many believe it was its duty to do, the worker would have regarded it as State tyranny; he would probably have paid very little attention to the fact that the State was controlled by his own political representatives, whom he has chosen—that the State was, indeed, himself. So that it is fair, and necessary, to ask whether the Communist society of Russia is not, after all, only a more honest form of social organization than the free society, at any rate in its present transitional condition. For it must be confessed that the free society of Britain is, at present, living in a world of illusion. It is being tided over the doubtful period, when it is uncertain whether the workers will accept the social discipline that is necessary if a reasonable standard of life in this country is to be maintained, by what amounts practically to charity: Britain is filling up the large gap between production and consumption by spending, and not very wisely spending, an American loan which Britain can hardly hope to repay. When that loan

is exhausted, the period of economic illusion will come to a sudden end, and the gap between production and consumption will have to be closed by reducing consumption still further from its present meagre level. Unless, of course, before the loan comes to an end production has greatly increased. That this increase will only be possible if there is a new social discipline throughout the country is now obvious. It is not merely the industrial workers who have to work harder, but everybody.

From the abstract point of view it could be said that the free society will have to learn by experience, and that it is, as we have urged, the supreme virtue of the free society that it can and does learn from experience. If Britain has not learned to impose the new social discipline upon itself before the American loan comes to an end, then the standard of living will go down, and the workers of all kinds will at last realize that it is only by their own exertions that it can be raised. Then, perforce, they will accept the new social discipline to which they are at present recalcitrant because they do not see, or rather "feel upon their pulses," the necessity of it.

That, in theory, is satisfactory enough. But it is impossible to ignore that, in practice, such an adjustment will do more than put a severe strain on the free society; it will imperil its very existence. For, unless the Labour government itself takes the responsibility of imposing social discipline beforehand, the consequence will be that the American loan will be spent with reckless speed; and it is unlikely—to put it mildly—that the same Labour government which has used up the dollar reserves of the country, spendthrift fashion, in order to avoid the onus of imposing social discipline, will have the courage to impose it suddenly when the extremity comes. The onus of doing that is more likely to be left to the Opposition; or if, as is not improbable, there is a split in the Labour movement on this issue between the political leaders and the Trade Unions, a National government will be formed to take the responsibility of enforcing social discipline. On the whole that seems the more likely. For not only would a Conservative government, if it obtained a majority in the country on this

issue, be in an impossible position if it tried to enforce social discipline against a united Labour movement; but the responsible political leaders of the Labour movement would themselves be in agreement with the Opposition on the necessity of the social discipline. A national "Centre" government would be the most likely and natural thing.

But even for a national "Centre" government to try to enforce industrial discipline against the will of the workers in their Trade Unions would be hazardous to the free society. With the organized workers in at least passive rebellion against the expressed will of the free society, on an issue vital to its existence, a dangerous situation would be created, in which it would be necessary temporarily to suspend one at least of the fundamental freedoms of the free society—freedom of association for the workers themselves. This does not mean that the free society would be at an end; any more than the freedom of the Roman city-state was ended by the temporary and *ad hoc* appointment of a Roman dictator. One might reasonably hope that the workers would come to their senses. For what could they hope to achieve, except anarchy and the distress of anarchy, from which they would suffer as much as anybody? For them to imagine that Communism offered a way of escape for them would be fantastic. Communism could only offer them a far more rigorous social discipline than that which they were rejecting.

This speculative investigation of the latent potentialities of the present situation in Britain is intended merely to drive home two points: first, that the free society in Britain is in a deceptive condition of euphoria, in which the decision of a vital issue is being postponed in the hope that self-education by exhortation may permeate in time to avoid a dangerous crisis; and, second, that the free society cannot avoid the problem which the Communist society tries to solve in its own forbidding way. Very soon the free society in Britain will be confronted with the urgent necessity of imposing social discipline upon itself. If, by that time, the workers have not learned the lesson that, in the free society when full political equality has been achieved, the State is themselves, and that to refuse the

social discipline which the State imposes is to defy conscience and to be in rebellion against themselves, there will be no escaping the necessity of compelling them to obedience to their own better nature.

Is that so very different from the Communist society? Do not the leaders of the new social organism proclaim to the workers that the State is themselves, and that in being compelled to obey it they are only being compelled to obey their own better natures? They do. The difference is that, in the case of the free society, it would be true, while in the case of the Communist society, it is not. That in the free society, the State is the citizens is manifestly true: they appoint those who control the State on their behalf, and change them as soon as they are dissatisfied. But the assertion of the Communist leaders to their subjects that the State is themselves is a dogma which, if it is accepted at all, must be accepted *de fide* as a truth of revelation. There is no earthly means of proving it, or checking it. It is the same with the dogma that in being compelled to obey the social disciplines enforced by the Communist State, the subjects are only being compelled to obey their own better natures. The ukases of the Communist State are the commands of a group of men who seized power and have perpetuated themselves in power by ruthlessly destroying all potential centres of criticism. There is no possibility that in being compelled to obey them, their subjects are obeying their own better nature, for the better nature of man consists in his own conscience; and where the operation of conscience is rigorously excluded from control of, or indeed effective influence in, the State, obedience to the State is merely destructive of the better nature of man. That is why the final end of the activities of the Soviet State is war. The Communist State is built upon the necessity of war, ruthless internal war against its internal "enemies," which is its necessary designation of those who criticize it, and equally ruthless war, when the moment comes, against the free societies, because so long as the free societies exist they threaten the moral foundations of the Soviet State, and because so long as the Soviet State exists it threatens theirs.

If the free society is ultimately constrained to use compulsion to enforce social discipline upon its workers, it will be lamentable ; but two things are certain, in that event. First, the workers who have to be compelled will be a minority, even of the workers, and, second, they will be manifestly in the wrong, engaged in a senseless activity which, if permitted, must create sheer anarchy. The recalcitrant workers will be a minority, because to imagine such compulsion applied by a minority against a majority, is to have assumed the end of the free society. Though it suits the book of those who are conspiring against the free society themselves to harp on the danger of Fascism in this country, it is nugatory. But there is a danger that the free society itself may be constrained to enforce a social discipline on a recalcitrant minority of workers ; and there is an even graver danger that the free society may be paralyzed by its inability to choose a government with the mandate or the power to enforce social discipline. If the workers' party were to continue to have the political majority, and were to refuse to obey the directions of the State which it would control, then the free society would be in ruins. I refuse to believe that the workers of Britain will ever be so bereft of conscience as this implies. But it is a theoretical possibility : and it would mean that the moral foundations of the free society had dissolved. In a majority of members of the free society conscience would have ceased to operate.

Nevertheless, although any conceivable form of compulsion of the workers by the State in the free society is generically different from the compulsion practised in the Communist society ; and although the origins, the methods and the final purpose of the two forms of society are totally opposed, both have in common that new absorption of the individual into the social whole which must increasingly be manifest in the machine-society. That is the fundamental difference between modern society and " bourgeois society." This absorption of the individual can take two forms : one of which is beneficent, the other evil. In the beneficent form the individual is compensated for his loss of freedom and responsibility as an individual, by participating more fully in the new moral life of society. The manner in

which this happens has been indicated, broadly, in our previous analysis of the free society as the political vehicle and instrument of conscience; its working has also been indicated, in greater detail, in our speculations on the immediate future of Britain.

These have shown that what the free society particularly demands is an increase of the consciousness of the whole in existing groups and associations. If the free society is to avoid, or be spared, the necessity of compulsive measures by the State, it can only be in so far as non-political groups and associations voluntarily impose upon themselves the social discipline necessary to the free society. Words are awkward here: because we have no language adequate to the new form of social existence. The existing connotations of both "state-compulsion" and "voluntarism" do violence to the reality of the fully free society. The State in a fully free society is a new kind of State, of which it can be truly said, that the State is the citizens themselves. Therefore state-compulsion is itself essentially voluntarism: a self-imposed discipline. There is, therefore, only a nuance of difference between a social discipline imposed by the State on groups and associations, and a social discipline imposed by them upon themselves. But the nuance is important: it is the nuance of difference, for instance, between being the immediate inspirer of legislation and the somewhat reluctant subject of it, or—even more happily—between agreeing upon a code of conduct which the State has only to approve and endorse, and waiting for the State to compel it. Hence the great significance and responsibility of voluntary groups and associations within the free society: they will, to the degree to which they are inspired by an understanding of the free society, establish the patterns of just legislation before the need of legislation becomes acute. They will anticipate the social disciplines which the free society requires.

This gives an insight into the nature and limits of the autonomy of associations and groups within the free society. The real purpose of their autonomy is to be centres of conscience: to be in advance of the law. Thus, it is only when the Trade Unions, or the Employers' Associations,

develop some of the positive functions of the old guilds, and exact a standard of "professional conduct" from their members for the benefit of the community as a whole, instead of combining for their own sectional advantage against the community as a whole, that they can justly claim the benefit of the traditional "freedom of association." The present perversion of the right of association is, so far as the Trade Unions are concerned, a humanly inevitable hang-over from the bitter days when neither the capitalist nor the State acknowledged any human obligation whatever to the workers. To save themselves from starvation, they were compelled to introduce restrictive practices. To work to their full capacity for good work was to invite misery. It is therefore only to be expected that the Trade Unions, whose ethos was formed in the stress of the struggle against cruel inhumanity, should find it difficult to adjust themselves to the surprising reality of the free society which has grown out of, and superseded, bourgeois society. That the Trade Unions should be, as they now are, to a very large extent in control of the State itself, is a situation so novel and so revolutionary that it is not in the least surprising that the average Union member is completely bewildered by it. Suddenly, almost overnight, what was right and loyal has become disloyal and wrong. That is the truth: and it is a revolutionary truth, which in its simple way may do more to demonstrate our fundamental thesis that in the free society man has entered a radically new mode of existence than the more abstract arguments of earlier chapters. The cause why this sudden revolution in the practical morality of the Trade Unions is required is clear. The free society has emerged, without any audible flourish of trumpets, at the end of an exhausting war. It was born in 1945; nobody in particular was aware of its birth, and many people even thought it was the death of the free society. Indeed, it was the death of the free society as they falsely conceived it—for what they thought was the free society was only the bourgeois society. What has taken its place is not the socialist society—because nobody knows what that is—but the fully free society. In that society the loyalty required of the worker is no longer loyalty to the fellow-members of

his sectional union but to the free society as a whole. That change of loyalty—a spiritual revolution, if ever there was one—cannot be accomplished in a day, or in a year. But unless it is accomplished the new society must fail.

Exactly the same necessity of spiritual revolution presses on every other voluntary association whose ethos, much less pardonably, has been shaped by the urge to combine *against* other members of society: above all, the Employers' Associations which have been formed partly to save their weaker members from bankruptcy, but in the main—though no doubt inevitably—to fleece the community at large.¹⁴ The only voluntary associations which need no repentance are those which have been formed for the good of the community as a whole: associations formed by men who had a loyalty to the community as a whole when it was not yet a whole.

This spiritual revolution—let us call it simply a change of attitude—on the part of groups and associations, is called for just as much in the political parties themselves. For example, it is entirely obsolete for the Conservative party to imagine that it can serve any good purpose at all by campaigning "against socialism." That slogan is entirely meaningless. The purpose of a true Conservatism is now to defend the fundamental freedoms, and the subsidiary freedoms which are necessary to them, against doctrinaire encroachments; but, above all, to inspire the employing class, who are its main supporters, with a sense of their overriding obligation to the community as a whole. It has to understand that the purpose of economic freedom and initiative is no longer the pursuit of private advantage, but pursuit of the satisfaction of doing one's best for society in one's own way. In one's own way—the means—is almost as important as the advantage of the community—the end: for unless men are free to serve the community in their own way, to the fullest extent possible, the community will be badly served. The Conservative party in the free society must learn to fight for initiative, not for privilege and profit. Likewise every political party must purge its traditions to accord with the demands of the free society. Each one has something of importance to con-

tribute to it, and it is not really difficult to discover what it is, providing the right instrument is used for the discovery. The instrument is conscience.

But, I think, one new—profoundly new—association is required in the free society: an association of those who understand it, and are inspired by the vision of its inexhaustible potentialities, by their knowledge of its preciousness and its precariousness. They will not form a new political party—God forbid: for that would reveal their complete misunderstanding of the free society. The function of the new association is to unite in a common bond of understanding those who, in every political party, and every other association, embody the consciousness and the conscience of the free society, and are determined that it shall gradually pervade the associations to which they belong and which they serve: the political parties themselves, the Trade Unions, the professional associations, the Christian Churches, the universities, and every one of the autonomous groupings in which the spiritual riches of the free society so largely consists. The free society, at this crisis in its being, in view of the great and unprecedented tasks before it, needs a new instrument, a new organ, for its consciousness and its conscience: not to supersede the existing ones; but to revivify them, by imparting to them an awareness of the *vita nuova* to which they are now called. This league or brotherhood of the free society, this “order” of those dedicated to its service, would be simply the vanguard of consciousness and conscience to come: the centre of indoctrination and inspiration whence its members would derive a new dynamic for the service of the free society in the various vocations and circumstances in which their actual work is done. Vocation is the word towards which I have been struggling and which I have been struggling to avoid, because it has been so much abused. But it cannot be avoided. The new “order” will inspire its members in every walk of life with a knowledge of their *vocation*—which is, to serve and preserve the free society.

So, by apparently wandering ways, and with no foreknowledge of the conclusion, in the endeavour to differen-

tiate between the new social organism of the free society and the new social organism of the Communist society, and at the same time to demonstrate their structural similarities, we have been insensibly compelled, by the inward logic of the free society, to prophesy and call for the formation of a new association, a new brotherhood, a new "order," which would be the palpable analogue to the Communist party in Soviet Russia. It is the corresponding organ in the anatomy of the free society: analogous, but totally different. Its purpose would be to inspire the existing organs of the free society with a new sense of the whole, not to supersede them, but to rejoice in them and their essential harmony. It would have a discipline, but a discipline entirely self-sought: it would be the quintessence of voluntarism. It would also have an orthodoxy: that consciousness and conscience are inseparable from another, that in their harmony they can lead man to the good, that this harmony of consciousness and conscience is achievable only within the free society, which has been created as the instrument for its gradual manifestation. The free political society was established in man's effort to reconcile conscience with the necessities of social existence. Now that political equality has been fully achieved, conscience has created its perfect instrument for discovering what it must do, and for doing it. That achievement has been in the main the work of what may be called the negative, or elemental, or individualised conscience, seeking its own freedom, and discovering that this freedom to be real must be universalised. The freedom of my conscience depends on the freedom of my brothers' consciences, and the freedom of my brothers' consciences must limit the freedom of my own. My conscience is only free indeed when it wills the limitation of its own freedom which is necessary to the existence of the society in which this self-limited conscience is free for all. That is the achievement embodied in the free political society when it has willed political equality for all. And that is the consummation of the first phase in its existence.

Now a new and more glorious phase begins. Society has become the perfect instrument for the further expression of the conscience that has shaped it into the free political

society. Now what society, in its new wholeness, wills as a whole is to be manifested. But this can be manifested only if society wills constantly to be a whole, and not an arbitrary and truncated fragment of itself. The politically free society has first to will that it shall remain a free society : that no insight of the conscience (which accepts the self-limitation necessary to its real freedom) shall be suppressed or denied. Granted this, the new phase of human history begins. It is the phase of what may be called positive, or secondary or socialised conscience. It is manifest in what the free society actually does, as it becomes increasingly conscious of what it now is : the society which, as a whole, is the instrument of conscience. That increasing awareness of its own nature, and of the new moral life, the new mode of existence, on which it has entered, is necessary if the free society is to remain a free society. It is necessary, therefore, but not inevitable. The free society may fail to achieve the consciousness that is necessary if it is to be the instrument of conscience. If it ceases to be that, it must cease to be the free society. No simple instinct of decency, or habit of tolerance, will now serve the turn : for the free society must be prepared for tensions which cannot be resolved by instinct or habit. It has to anticipate them and overcome them before they occur. In other words, the politically free society has now consciously and continually to will its own existence as a free society.

In order that this may be done, a new centre of conscience must be created, or rather a multitude of new centres. Such centres, I believe, are already emerging, some on the initiative and with the endorsement of the new State, as the new "working parties" conceived by Sir Stafford Cripps, others by spontaneous response to the new need. Their purpose is generally to overcome, by a new communal inspiration and a new awareness of society as a whole, conflicts rooted in the old order of "bourgeois society" and natural to it, which are potentially fatal to the new one. Or they may have the purpose of seeking to understand more deeply the nature of the crisis in which humanity is evidently involved, and of which this country, being the most notable example of the free society in transition, feels

the stress in every province of its activity, and every fibre of its being. All that these emergent centres of the new conscience need is the common vision and the common faith which will co-ordinate them: the common awareness that they are centres of the new socialised conscience which is necessary if the free society is to will its own existence, and so make manifest the path into the new phase of human history.

If only this new organ of the free society can be created, or evolved by inward necessity, to correspond with the Party in the new social organism of the Communist society, we need not fear for the future of the free society. The functions of the two organs, to a sociological analysis, are the same: their inward purposes antipodal. They might both be described sociologically as organs of the socialised consciousness. But how diametrically opposed is the content of the phrase in either case! Both might be described, sociologically, as instruments for inspiring society with a sense of the need of the whole. But how different the whole! On the one hand, a whole unitary, monolithic, arbitrary, created by the incessant suppression of conscience, and driven towards an end which defies formulation by human reason and destroys all morality, substituting for it unquestioning obedience to the dictates of absolute and infallible power. On the other hand, a whole that is diverse, harmonious, chosen by free and responsible human beings, created by the effort of conscience over centuries, moving towards an end which calls for the best in human reason and reinspires morality. Yet just as the Soviet State claims that itself is the supreme good, so apparently does the free society. Here again how profound the difference! For the goodness which the free society claims for itself is self-evident; it is corroborated by the only evidence that reason can admit—the free witness of its citizens. Whereas the goodness of the Soviet State is merely the *ipse dixit* of its infallible leaders: the dogma by which they justify their refusal to take the witness of their subjects, and their systematic elimination of those who have dared to think it bad. The marvel is that this dogma is subscribed to by many people within the free societies

themselves. If one were to ask why the Soviet State is the supreme good, seeing that those who alone can judge its goodness are condemned to silence, the only rational reply is that it has been *revealed* to those who control it that it is good.

The free society does not claim that it is the supreme good merely on the evidence of its own citizens ; but also because the freedom to give their evidence is a necessary condition of the moral life. In the free society conscience establishes the conditions of its own continued existence ; under the Soviet State it is compelled to submit to its own annihilation. The Communist party may serve as the consciousness of the Soviet State ; its conscience it cannot be. For the Soviet State has no conscience, nor can it develop one, without disintegration. But the free society is nothing else than the vehicle of conscience. Take conscience away from the free society ; it dies instantly. Add conscience to the Communist society : it will kill it instantly.

Finally, whereas the Soviet state is the creation of the Party, the analogue of the Party in the free society would be the creation of the free society. The Party in Russia is the instrument by which the fiat of the infallible leadership is imposed upon the vile body of the Russian masses. The Party of the free society is simply the means by which the instinctive purposes and actions of the free society achieve full consciousness. Being truly the means to fuller freedom, it is free for whoever wills to enter, or for whoever wills to turn away. The Party comes first in the history of the Communist society ; the Party of the free society last in its history.

CHAPTER XXI

CONSCIENCE AND HISTORY

THE free society, we have argued, arises from the tension between two fundamental human needs: the need for satisfaction of conscience, and the need for ordered society. The latter is necessary for human existence, the former for humane life. In the process of working out this tension political institutions are created, whereby conscience becomes active and in the last resort decisive in the proceedings of society as a whole. This new wholeness of society is itself the creation of conscience; and it reaches a first consummation in the politically free society, in which is established political equality for all adult members. This political equality is a permanent characteristic of the free society. It cannot be abrogated or surrendered by the decision of a majority. Political equality, to be permanent, requires full freedom for the minority: which can be maintained only by the activity of conscience throughout society.

But conscience, as it achieves this new organ of expression, this new body politic to inhabit, which is the free society, discovers the self-limitation that is necessary to its own existence. It sheds its potentially anarchic tendencies, and becomes conscious of the law of its own being: which is to will the existence of the free society, wherein alone freedom for the individual conscience is practically compatible with the freedom of conscience of all other members of society. In willing the existence of the free society, conscience willingly obeys its laws, not as believing that they represent perfect justice, but a continuous approximation to justice, continuously corrigible by conscience, active through its new organ, the politically free society and its institutions.

Conscience thus reveals its own nature: it is that in man which strives for justice in due regard for the necessities of human existence. But such a definition is, in reality,

circular. Justice is present in that ordering of society which conscience approves because it understands it to be necessary to its own manifestation. Which then is primary—conscience or justice? It is idle to argue. Do we teach something that is primary if we consider man as striving for self-affirmation and for the conditions which make self-affirmation possible? An autocrat achieves self-affirmation, by denying his subjects the possibility of self-affirmation. But conscience desires, and seeks as just, that form of society in which the self-affirmation of each is compatible with the self-affirmation of all. Whether we regard this as the original ethical intuition of an individual, or as the tentative and gradual discovery by human society of the conditions of its own most satisfying existence, or (as I prefer to do) as a combination of both, there is little doubt that the actual content of conscience is the demand for the just society, in this definite sense that the just society is a society in which the self-affirmation of each is compatible with the self-affirmation of every other member.

Conscience desires and wills that society. And it is questionable whether conscience has any other valid content at all: any other content appears to be the product of subjective vagary. If we express this by saying that the content of conscience is essentially social, we are perhaps only saying that, apart from society, man is an unreal abstraction; and that conscience, though often associated with extravagant emphasis on the freedom of the individual, necessarily discovers itself to be a concern for freedom in society.

When we understand that the content of conscience is the demand for the just society, in which the self-affirmation of each member is compatible with the self-affirmation of all, it becomes plain why conscience is often regarded as specifically Christian, for it is easy to see that the essential message of Jesus was the proclamation of precisely such a society as imminent—in the Kingdom of God. Moreover, as we showed in our account of the historical origins of the free society, this society was empirically realized in the mediæval Christian Church, however gross the imperfections and limitations imposed by

the necessities of the time. But by the reassertion of the claim of conscience against the authoritarian Church, the *soi-disant* universality of the empirical Church was directly disproved: it had ceased itself to be even an approximately convincing realisation of the just society and, with the decay of the monasticism which had preserved much of the original inspiration, it had ceased altogether to be a source of impulsion towards the just society. Then, through the combined operation of Christian conscience, seeking a society in which freedom of worship was maintained by law, and of secular conscience, seeking to maintain and enlarge traditional liberties of the subject, the elements of the free society were created. But it is important to realise that Christian conscience and secular conscience were particular forms assumed by the single demand for a society in which the self-affirmation of each is compatible with the self-affirmation of all. The demand was imperfectly conscious of itself, in either case; but it is just to say that, at this crucial moment of history, in positing the elements of the free society, Christian inspiration achieved something nearer to its original form than it had achieved before. For it was an essential part of the original Christian proclamation that the just society was imminent. By postponing the coming of the Kingdom of God to the after-life, the Church had violently, though necessarily, distorted the message.

As far as this life was concerned, the Church had claimed to be the Kingdom of God—as it were an anticipatory congregation of its future members: and that was, in part, an authentic development of Jesus' gathering together the members of the Kingdom. But there was a vital difference. Jesus believed and taught that the Kingdom was coming momentarily. So did the earliest Christians, even after his death. The Church postponed it indefinitely. The facts of experience compelled this. The Kingdom did not come. And the Church was unable to say that Jesus had made a mistake. I have no such difficulty: particularly because the mistake seems to me quite unimportant, and due simply to the eschatological mode of his thinking. The real issue between my "Christianity" and that of the Christian Church is: which is the more faithful translation of Jesus' essential

message from a frame of reference which is now alien and remote from all, namely the expectation of an imminent end to the world in time :—to conceive the Kingdom of God as a community to be realized in a life after death, or to conceive it as a community towards which there is a gradually increasing approximation in history—an approximation that is asymptotic, which can never become identical, because it is impossible to conceive an earthly society in which conscience is so wholly satisfied that it is at rest. That beatitude may be reserved for the Communion of Saints in Heaven. I do not know, and I discover no absolute compulsion in myself to believe it ; but I understand and respect the reasons why others do. But I neither understand nor respect those who, because they believe this, close their eyes to the beauty and the truth, the splendour and necessity of the human struggle to achieve the Christian community in an earthly and political society.

This struggle is real, and it is inspiring. In it, I believe, is contained the meaning of history. But mankind struggles to achieve the Christian community in an earthly and political society not because the community is Christian, but because Christian is a true name for the kind of community it seeks, at the command of conscience. Whether conscience would have taken the form it has without the spiritual inspiration of Jesus—who can say ? To me it seems a senseless speculation. “History is always right,” as Hegel said ; and the historical fact is that the astonishing spiritual intuition of Jesus has counted for very much indeed in the development of conscience. What Jesus intuited as necessary to man’s full humanity—membership of a society wherein the self-affirmation of each is compatible with the self-affirmation of all—is become the actual content of conscience. If He believed that the creation of such a society was God’s evident will, is that so very extraordinary ? Most people who accept the fact of conscience describe it in that way. Conscience, they say, is the voice of God. The question is whether it is possible to describe it in any other way.

Whether it sheds any light on the actual fact of conscience to describe it in this way is another matter. Or,

to put it more exactly, is it the idea of God which illuminates the fact of conscience, or the fact of conscience which illuminates the idea of God? I do not know how to answer that question. I can only say that, in so far as I believe in God, it is because of the fact of conscience that I do. And that appears to me to be true always in the last resort. If I am compelled, as I am, to seek a meaning in human history—and to seek a meaning in history is, indubitably, “to seek God,” and to find a meaning in history is “to find God”—it is conscience that compels me to the search. And the meaning that I find in history is also conscience: the struggle of mankind, impelled by conscience, towards the just society. Is the conscience that compels me to seek a meaning in history of the same nature as the conscience that I find at work in history and wherein I find the meaning of history? Does it come within my definition of conscience as that which seeks the just society—the society in which the self-affirmation of each is compatible with the self-affirmation of all? Or is my definition of conscience too narrow?

I find the question profoundly perplexing. All I seem at this moment to know is that the conscience which bids me seek a meaning in history is finally satisfied and at rest in the discovery that the meaning of history lies in the fact of conscience, interpreted as I have interpreted it, as that which impels mankind to struggle towards the just society. Am I justified in interpreting the beginning by the end? Does the fact that conscience finally reveals itself as that which seeks the just society—or the earthly and political community in which conscience is free—also reveal that in seeking the meaning of history I was seeking, however unwittingly, precisely this?

What do I intend when I say that I seek a meaning in history? Or rather, what did I intend when, now many years ago, I began the search for one? It seemed, as it still seems, tremendously important—the most important thing, by far, in life. Unless I could find a meaning in history—the meaning of history, perhaps—my own life would have no meaning. It would be “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” If I could find a meaning in history, I would cease to be un-

related, a mere atom of consciousness : I should be part of the meaning, and I could be obedient to it. In this sense, my search for a meaning in history was not disinterested, for the possibility of meaning in my own life depended upon my finding a meaning in history. Yet, on the other hand, it was disinterested—the most completely disinterested activity in which I was ever engaged, because it was of absolute importance that I should not deceive myself. To find the wrong meaning in history—that would have been completely disastrous. That would have been to fudge the sum on which my salvation depended. To seek the truth of human history, and to find it meaningful—this was what conscience compelled me to do. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that conscience compelled me to seek the truth of history, and at the same time inspired me with the conviction that the truth of history, *if* I could find it, was bound to be meaningful. Are truth and meaning, as applied to history, the same?

Conscience compelled me to seek the true meaning of history. Did it obscurely affirm that there *must* be a meaning in history, because my own life would be meaningless unless there was one? I think it did : though I am not sure whether it was conscience that affirmed this. The search for a meaning in history was thus a process of self-affirmation. But it is equally true, and equally important, that I hungered to find a meaning in history in order that I might obey it. In other words, conscience compelled me to seek a meaning in history in order that I could discover my duty in this life. When I had discovered my duty, my life would cease to be meaningless. Thus, my self-affirmation was, from first to last, a search for self-limitation : to become a faithful servant of the continuing meaning of history.

Did I make any reservation whatsoever in thus dedicating myself, at the command of conscience, to seeking the truth and meaning of history? Yes, I did : one very important and crucial reservation. But I was entirely unaware of making it at the time my search began. Since my discovery of it is very relevant to this argument, the manner of it may be described.

I had prosecuted my search for some years, and had disentangled the rough outlines of a pattern, when I began to read Marx's "Capital." I found it absorbing, read on avidly to the end of the book, and was completely overwhelmed by his vision of history. I then read all his works from the beginning, and by the end was thoroughly converted to his view that the meaning of history—that is to say, of the phase in it in which I participated—would culminate in the emancipation of the working-class by itself. The question immediately arose: Was I to become a Communist or a Socialist? It was answered, as immediately, by my conscience. Though I sat down to write a little book which I determined to call "The Necessity of Communism," the whole purpose of it was to demonstrate that in Britain the objectives of Communism could, and must, be sought only through the peaceful process of the free society. I ruled out revolutionary violence. Why did I rule it out? I had two reasons, which seemed to me at the time distinct, though I was vaguely aware of a hidden relation between them. The first reason was that violent and conspiratorial revolution was contrary to the ethos and the institutions of Britain. The working-class in Britain had in its hands in the universal and equal franchise the means of its own emancipation. If it could not use that means, it must be because the working-class had not the desire, the imagination or the will to emancipate itself. To dream of substituting for that desire, imagination and will, the violent seizure of power by a tiny minority "on behalf of," but against the will of, the working-class itself, was the dream of diseased and corrupted minds.

The second reason was that, quite directly, conscience forbade me, as an Englishman, to support any party or group which advocated revolutionary violence or the seizure of power by a minority. I say, my conscience forbade me as an Englishman to do this. My conscience gave me no indication of what I should have done if I had been a Russian. I was prepared to believe that, had I been a Russian in 1917, I might have been a follower of Lenin, whose works I also studied carefully. But I never had the faintest conviction about the matter; and I felt that it was im-

possible that I could have any real conviction about it. But I was quite certain that, being what I was, an Englishman, my conscience compelled me to reject, out of hand, the notion of revolutionary violence. I was, and straightway professed myself to be, a democratic Socialist, resolutely opposed to Communism.

All of which is personal and may be tedious : but it seems to me very relevant. For the fact was that in obeying the urge of my conscience to find a meaning in history, by obedience to which I could give meaning to my own life, I was brought to a point at which my line of action was determined by my conscience as an Englishman. A specifically English conscience sounds at first a queer thing ; but it loses its queerness if the main contention of this book be true : that England originated and has carried to its fullest extant development the free society, of which the essential characteristic is that it embodies conscience in its political institutions. To discover that one's action in obedience to the discovered meaning of history is finally governed by the conscience in which one participates as a member of the free society of England is not really surprising.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MEANING OF THE MEANING OF HISTORY

BUT have I, by the foregoing personal narrative, thrown any light upon the question which perplexes me? The question is: "Is the conscience which compels me to seek a meaning in history of the same nature as the conscience that I find at work in history and wherein I find the meaning of history? Does it come within the definition of conscience as that which seeks the just society?" It is plain, on analysis, that the reason why one seeks a meaning in history is that one may discover one's duty. But why must duty be related to history? Is that a subjective necessity or a general truth? A general truth, surely, in this sense that, if there is a purpose in history, it must determine one's duty. Conversely, if there is no purpose in history, duty is a meaningless word. The conscience that seeks a meaning in history is conscience seeking to know its duty.

Shall we find the missing link of connection, if we ask: "Is there any *possible* meaning in history save the struggle of conscience towards the just society? Or, is there any conceivable meaning of history from which duty can be derived save this?" I feel that the answer is No; but my limited mind is bewildered by the attempt to prove it. I can dimly see that any other conception of duty save as the obligation to strive for the just society is irrational and self-contradictory, and that, if this is so, unless history can honestly be so read as to sanction and confirm that conception of duty, duty itself becomes irrational. But the sense of duty, the obscure but obstinate conviction that there is a duty, and that it is one's duty to find it, seems to me the deepest element in man—almost, the essence of man: the element whereby he is human. That it should be irrational is inconceivable. The crucial

distinction, I suppose, is between those men who accept their duty as an obligation imposed upon them by an authority quite external to themselves, and those whose sense of obligation arises primarily from within themselves: to whom authentic duty first manifests itself as a conviction that it is their duty to find what their duty is. The duty they seek is a duty that does no violence to their reason, but is a duty which reason points to and confirms. They thus experience a double obligation: the obligation to discover their duty, and the obligation to satisfy their reason. The double obligation is satisfied by the effort to discover a meaning in history whose further unfolding they may serve. But, as the personal example showed, to accept that the meaning of history is revealed as a process which culminates in the self-emancipation of the working-class, and to discover that one's duty is to help on that process, does not involve accepting the necessity of revolutionary violence. Quite the contrary. Reason further demands that, in a free society, the idea of revolutionary violence should be absolutely rejected.

Yet, in the previous chapter, I described—quite instinctively—this same demand as the demand of conscience. Are reason and conscience then the same? It seems to me that essentially they are. Implicit in reason is the obligation to reason honestly. We experience it as a duty to seek “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” Moreover, since the free society is the only society which enables men to perform that duty, and was established expressly for that purpose, it must be said that the free society is the society in which the essential identity of reason and conscience is revealed. We may describe it, indifferently, as the society of conscience or the society of reason; it is the society which either of those powers, or both together in their necessary interdependence, are compelled to create for themselves in order to function. Just as we described the free society and its institutions as the objectification of conscience, so we might equally well describe them as the objectification of reason. Indeed, without realising what we were doing, we have already done so when we compared the correction of the action of the

majority in the free society by the criticism, and eventually the advent to power, of the minority, to the correction of a scientific hypothesis by further experiment. The free society is the form of political organisation in which the essential processes of reason and conscience are not merely guaranteed to individuals, but are continuously at work in the massive processes of society as a whole, so that the social organism becomes itself the instrument of conscience and reason.

Thus, in spite of my previous perplexity, it seems to be clear that the conscience which compels me to seek a meaning in history is of the same nature as the conscience which seeks the just society. The conscience which, as reason, seeks a meaning in history, also, as reason, demands the free society as the condition of its own functioning. Or, to put the truth another way, it is only in the free society that reason is free to seek the meaning of history. Whatever else the meaning of history may be, it must culminate in the free society. That is indeed the consummation of the meaning of history so far, and henceforward the future meaning of history depends upon whether the members of the free society have the moral will to maintain the free society in existence: whether they have reason and conscience enough to allow reason and conscience their necessary medium of manifestation.

Thus, in the last resort, the meaning of history depends upon an affirmation of the moral will. I think that is indubitable: not in the sense that the moral will necessarily projects the meaning on to history, though it frequently does, but in the sense that the moral will is necessary to search for a meaning in history at all. The same moral will without which the search for truth would not be undertaken creates the free society as the means to its own continued existence. To say, therefore, that the free society is the consummation of history so far and that the future meaning of history depends upon whether its members have the moral will to maintain it in being, though it may sound like a repetition of Hegel's discovery that the Idea of history was realized in the Prussian State, is quite different and really a truism. It is the equivalent, in terms of the new mode of

social existence, of the obvious truism that, without man, history could have no meaning. History needs the consciousness of man to understand it: but not the *mere* consciousness of man, but the reason and the conscience which compel it to disinterested activity. If it is true—as it undoubtedly is—that man, apart from society, is a meaningless abstraction, it is plainly true also that the meaning of history depends upon the continued existence of that form of society in which alone the reason and conscience of man can continue to exist.

It follows that, if the free society should perish, the meaning of history will perish also. It will indeed become “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” For the interpretation of history will pass into the minds or hands of men incapable of interpreting it, because reason and conscience will have been obliterated in them. To interpret history without reason and conscience is a contradiction in terms, or an insanity. Yet the danger is great that this almost unimaginable catastrophe may happen, in what would appear to be the only way such a catastrophe could happen: by an interpretation of history, which deliberately excludes the operation of reason and conscience, being made the dogma of a powerful authoritarian state whose leaders have the will and possess the means to exterminate reason and conscience from the social organism over which they have acquired absolute control. On the face of things it seems incredible that such a state should have, as it has, an enormous power of attraction for some members of the free societies, and that by their means it may possibly acquire the power to disintegrate and paralyze those societies. But if we reflect that the free society depends upon the activity of reason and conscience, not as lawless manifestations of subjectivity but as faculties disciplined to the service of the society on which they depend for their existence, we shall quickly understand why the lawlessness of reason and conscience in the free society creates so many surfaces of infection upon which the mortal contagion of the new social organism of Communism can fasten. The lawlessness of reason and conscience in the free society breaks down the healthy tissue

of the moral and human life of those whom it infects. Lacking now the power of self-discipline, which alone gives rational meaning to their lives, they are compelled to seek an imposed coherence which only an authoritarian and infallible leadership can supply. And that leadership is invested with infallibility and omnipotence, in the last analysis, precisely because it is based on an interpretation of history which rigorously excludes reason and conscience as motive powers in the historical process. That interpretation of history must inevitably lead men where it has led them—into a complete moral vacuum.

That moral vacuum is embodied and organized in the Soviet State; and in that form it becomes a fearful engine of destruction. Whether or not its leaders clearly and consciously will the end, they cannot avoid using the power of the Soviet State, wherever its influence extends, to destroy reason and conscience. Only one criterion is possible for them to apply to their own activities, and the activities of the millions they directly or indirectly command: whether they will, or will not, increase the power of the Soviet State, in the form in which it now exists. That alone is Good; and everything that withstands it is Evil, and to be directly or deviously annihilated. For the interpretation of history to which they subscribe and which they impose, with all the vast powers of the perfected modern police-state, on 200 millions of subjects, is one which leaves them completely absolved from all moral restraints. Thus, the meaning of history comes to an abrupt end in the Soviet State: it culminates in a titanic engine for "changing history" and changing man—a huge, morally absolved, and therefore astonishingly regimented society, careering no man knows whither, with no purpose save the accumulation of more power, and the destruction of everything that resists it—every faculty of man, every organisation of society.

Quite literally, in the Soviet State, human history becomes meaningless. The dictum of Marx that, with the self-emancipation of the proletariat, "pre-human history ends and human history begins" is changed, by the advent of the Soviet State, into a monkey-caricature of itself. In

the Soviet State, "human history ends and sub-human history begins." And the cause of that dramatic and sinister perversion of Marx's dream is to be found in the authority of the simple, and evilly sacred, phrase, "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." That is a contradiction in terms. No conceivable proletariat, in Marx's sense of the word, can dictate. To whom shall it dictate? Only to the workers themselves, who must be in a majority in any society in which a Marxist social revolution is possible. And how can workers dictate to themselves? They can only govern themselves: and self-government is impossible, for ever impossible, except by the exercise of reason and conscience. "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat" inevitably means "Dictatorship imposed upon the Proletariat"; and when the proletariat has suffered dictatorship to be imposed upon it, there is no revolutionary class remaining to overthrow its tyranny.

Either the free society will survive and expand to carry on the meaning of history as a process wherein reason and conscience come, gradually, painfully, but steadily, to control more completely the kind of society that is necessary to specifically human existence; or the Soviet social organism will survive and expand to annihilate all meaning from history, by universalizing the dictatorship imposed upon the proletariat—exactng the final surrender by the workers of the world of their own humanity, their godlike faculties of reason and conscience, for the promise of material goods. That this catastrophe will not happen, who can say?

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LOGOS-CIVILIZATION

THE meaning of history, we have said, depends upon an affirmation of the moral will. The same moral will which, as reason, bids us seek "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" in history, creates the free society as the social medium necessary to its own existence. Thus, the same moral will which is required to maintain the free society in being, by that activity maintains the possibility of further meaning in history—not the possibility merely, but the assurance of it. For the new moral life of the fully free political society, its new institutions, its new social morality, its mistakes, its corrections of its mistakes, its sins and repentances—these will constitute the future meaning of history. The indispensable condition is that the free society shall remain free—the embodiment of conscience in a political brotherhood of men and women, so organised as to permit its continuous expression.

In absolute opposition to this stands the new social organism of the Communist society, explicitly based on a fixed and final interpretation of history which culminates in the apotheosis of a huge authoritarian racial state—racial rather than national, since the enforced incorporation of the Slav states into the Russian "sphere of influence." This social organism claims moral justification because it claims to be the predestined and "divinely" ordained instrument of the emancipation of the proletariat throughout the world. But that claim, as we have seen, is a monstrous imposition. The proletariat is "emancipated" by being deprived of the very possibility of responsible freedom—whether finally or not, who can say? But if the possibility of responsible freedom is restored to it, it can only be by the dissolution of the Soviet State. Only by the dissolution of the Soviet State will the "emancipated" proletariat

ever be able to pass judgment on whether it has been emancipated or not.

Thus the meaning of history passes into the keeping of the absolved and omnipotent will of the infallible leaders of the new Communist social organism, just as it passes, on the other side, into the keeping of the moral will of the free society. The processes are absolutely antithetical. In one the meaning of history culminates in the arbitrary will of the controllers of a social organism from which conscience and reason are ruthlessly excluded; in the other it culminates in the creation of a society which exists, in the last resort, solely in order that reason and conscience may be operative, and is bound together solely by reason and conscience.

Thus understood, the opposition is apocalyptic in its intensity and significance. Man is confronted with a moral choice of unprecedented gravity: between a slow struggle upwards, and a sudden plunge downwards, into a new species of humanity. It seems plain that a catastrophic break in the continuity of human development is threatened, if it has not already occurred. Wherever the new social organism of Communism penetrates and takes hold, the continuity is broken absolutely; wherever it is successfully resisted, the continuity is maintained. If we may use "the iron curtain," not in the sense of a definite political or geographical frontier, but as the symbol of the dividing line between the Communist social organism and the societies which are still free, or retain the potentiality of freedom, we may say that on the other side of "the iron curtain" the meaning of history has ceased.

That, I recognise, seems a fantastic statement. Something is happening on the other side of "the iron curtain" and something will go on happening. And what is happening and will happen there is of tremendous significance. But the significance of those events is a significance only for minds on this side of the curtain. They only can appraise them, because they only have a canon of truth by which appraisal is possible. For those within the curtain there is no standard of reference. There will be statistics—though it is hard to see why they should be accurate statistics

—of the tons of coal, the kilowatts of electricity, the bales of cotton produced ; and perhaps one day will be issued a statement that the standard of life of the Soviet subject is higher than that of the citizen of the free society, and presumably the Soviet subject will believe it, though why it should be true, I do not know. Precisely because there will be no standard of, nor motive for, truth in these proceedings, they will be meaningless. There can be no meaning in the happenings within a state wherein truth has been totally superseded by propaganda—for the subjects of that state.

No doubt there will be purpose in the decisions and activities of the leaders of the state, and the makers of its propaganda. Their purpose is self-evident : it is to accumulate the power which will enable the new social organism to expand itself, and to push forward the frontier of meaninglessness till it includes the whole earth. Meaninglessness cannot co-exist with meaningfulness in any stable equilibrium. One or the other must give way. Since meaningful history must seek, incessantly, to replace power by morality, or rather to make power and morality approximate ever more closely to one another, while meaningless history must seek to replace morality by power, the clash between the two cannot be long delayed. Moralized power will seek to extend meaning and morality into the realm of meaninglessness, while power absolved from morality will seek to extend meaninglessness into the realm of the meaningful.

Between these two forces there is no possibility of agreement or compromise. That requires a common conscience, a common reason, which does not and cannot exist. Already it has been made plain in a thousand ways that no real communication is possible between the Soviet State and the free societies : not only because vital words have quite different meanings on either side, but because there is no convention that the words of intercourse must have a common meaning. No treaty with the Soviet State can be regarded as having any validity, by any sane man. From the Soviet point of view international agreements are the monkey-tricks which it has to imitate. If the opposite side believes that these monkey-tricks have meaning and

imply obligation, so much the better ; but whether, and how far, it really believes in the meaning and obligation is, and must be, as unfathomable a mystery to the leaders of the Soviet State as their purposes and calculations are to the statesmen of the free societies. They are, really, incomprehensible animals to one another.

The factual evidence is plain : but it is bewildering to a European. The European mind cannot take in the fact that for Communism *there really are no rules*. The European mind clings pathetically to the conviction that the rules of the conduct of the new Communist social organism will emerge, and that it will eventually be found to have been obeying the rules all along ; because Europeans cannot, for all their own ugly ways, conceive a world or a life without rules. Neither, for that matter, can I. But I have a little imagination ; and I can not only see the pragmatic fact that for Soviet Russia there are no rules, which is plain to anyone who retains the innocent eye ; but, because I have studied Marxism and felt its tremendous and shattering force, I can understand why there are no rules for Soviet Russia and why there can be none.

The phenomenon with which we are faced can be described in many ways, according to the category of human experience in which we approach it. We have already attempted several. The important fact is that it is novel and revolutionary in all. Professor Hodge^s has suggested that we should use the biological metaphor and regard the phenomenon as a mutation, as distinct from a variation, in the human type.¹⁵ Whether that has really occurred on a large scale it is difficult to judge. I should say that it is probably true as regards the actual leaders of the Soviet state and the inner nucleus of the Communist party in Russia ; but how far it has proceeded among the masses of the Russian people is another question, on the answer to which much depends. What we can say with assurance is that an attempt is being made, on a colossal scale, and by unprecedented means, to produce a mutation of the human type. The Soviet state is the instrument by which this change is being attempted. Whether the attempt will succeed is a question which admits of no

simple answer. For the attempt may fail simply because the conscience and reason of man are in fact indestructible : in which case, in spite of all the tremendous pressure, in spite of the conditioning from childhood upward, brought to bear on the Soviet subject, he will in the mass be recalcitrant to the change enforced upon him. We need not expect individual martyrs and heroes in the cause of reason and conscience. The time for them is gone by ; the machinery of repression is now far too intricate and efficient to permit their emergence, or at least to let it be known that they have emerged. What we should expect is rather a mass "going slow," partly as an instinctive movement of protest against basically inhuman conditions of life, partly in consequence of a real decay of vital human energy—spiritual, mental, physical—under such conditions. In other words, if the conscience and reason of man are in fact indestructible, the Soviet state will begin to decay from within, and the accumulation of overwhelming power at which its leaders aim will prove in fact to be impossible. Ultimately, the strength of the Soviet state must depend upon the positive and creative energy of its subjects. Mere biological proliferation will not supply the place of this. In the coming age it certainly is not true that a nation of 200 millions will be twice as strong as a nation of half the size.

Or it may fail because the free societies become determined that it shall not be allowed to succeed. An accumulation of conscienceless power as we have seen, must threaten to destroy them. If the accumulation of power really takes place, which will be evidence that the mutation of the human species is being accomplished, the free societies will have to act against it, or succumb to it themselves. We have already discussed the right mode of action : whether it will be taken depends upon the moral will of the free societies. If they are deeply corroded by the moral nihilism which emanates from Soviet Russia, they will be incapacitated from action.

But to take the attitude of Gamaliel towards the new phenomenon—"Let us beware lest we be fighting against God"—is possible only to minds which radically mis-

conceive the nature of the human crisis. It is a crisis in the nature of God himself. Man is called to decide which is indeed God: the God who declares himself in the human conscience, or the God who is incarnate in the State which has for its "historical mission" to "emancipate" the working-class by eradicating its conscience.

Naturally, if the God who declares himself in the human conscience is a God who has declared once for all that we must not resist evil, the practical question is settled. The God incarnate in the conscienceless state may have his way in this world, and the dissolution of the free society is of no moment. That may be all very well for the saints, for whom the life of this world is verily of no account in comparison with the reality and the glory of the life which is to come. But, in my experience, such saints are few and far between. The God of those who, in the free society, profess belief in God, is a God who declares Himself in a conscience which fights for the right against the wrong. And the majority of the relatively few in the free society who maintain that conscience forbids them to fight against the wrong, but commands them to suffer it, take for granted their own existence in the free society in which they have to suffer no wrong at all. They are more concerned for their comfort in this world than the average unthinking man for whom it is natural to do his civic duty and endure danger when the free society commands. They have nothing whatever in common with the saint who counts this life a little thing.

The effective choice Man has to make is the choice between two Gods, and only two: on the one hand, the God who is the sanction and source of the human conscience which, being one with the human reason, cannot be self-contradictory, and which has created the free society; and, on the other hand, the God who is consubstantial with the morally absolved and conscienceless Communist state. That there may be a third God, in whose sight the free society and the Communist society are alike indifferent, trivial and transitory manifestations of His inscrutable purposes in an infinitesimal planet of one of the innumerable solar systems of the universe, I do not deny. But my mind

and my heart are at one in declaring that if such a being does exist, his existence makes no difference to me. It is not such a being which manifests itself in conscience. The God of conscience is a living God, whose presence I acknowledge and adore. He is not indifferent as between the free society and the totalitarian society: the one is his chosen habitation, from the other he is shut out.

If the free society should perish, the God of conscience will have no society of men in which to live. I cannot, as some do, console myself with the thought that there will remain God's own society, the eternal Christian Church. I do not believe that that is a *real* thought: it is only an escape from thinking. The Christian Church enduring in the totalitarian catacombs is a deceitful fantasy. If the free society dies, the Christian Church will die. And a concordat with totalitarianism will kill it as surely as totalitarian persecution.

To say that the life of the Christian Church depends upon the life of the free society may be shocking to many Christians, who would hold rather that the life of the free society depends upon the life of the Christian Church. I certainly do not say it in order to shock, but because I believe that the assumption that the Christian Church is eternal is really an assumption within the framework of this civilization—the Christian civilization which has culminated in the free society. It is an assumption concerning the nature of man: the assumption that elements in human nature which have been developed in the Christian civilization and have developed that civilization will endure even if that civilization perishes. Those who make this assumption, which is often called faith, do not realize that it belongs to the closed system of thought of a civilization that is not inherently eternal. Those who believe that the Christian Church is eternal, really believe that the Christian civilization is eternal.

It may be: , but whether it is or not depends upon the moral will of man—not on the moral will of man conceived as independent of God, but as dependent on God. It is impossible to conceive conscience without simultaneously conceiving God. But the reality of the God who speaks through

the moral conscience and the conscience of reason is dependent on those who hear and obey His voice. The Christian civilization, after all, is a civilization which has been created by the interpenetration of those two forms of conscience. And the Christian God is the God of that civilization. If that civilization perishes, He also will perish.

If that seems an intolerable or blasphemous thought, I must urge again that it appears so only to those who cannot, by any effort of the imagination, get their minds outside the closed thought-system of this civilization. "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God" is the title-deed of *this* civilization: it will not be the title-deed of the civilization which will succeed it, if the continuity of this one is broken. We cannot save ourselves by saying that apart from the Logos—the conscience of reason and morality—human existence is inconceivable. It is true: human existence *is* inconceivable apart from the Logos. But sub-human existence is not. And it is sub-human existence which now threatens this civilization as it has never been threatened before.

It is possible, and I am constrained to think it may even be probable, that this new sub-human existence cannot endure, because the Logos cannot be denied for ever. But, having been compelled by the phenomenon of Soviet Russia, and the corrupt fascination it exercises even on many who should be covenanted servants of the Logos, to force my mind into a momentary detachment from the civilization in which I live and move and have my being, I can see that my obstinate feeling that it is not only possible but probable that the sub-human existence, based on a repudiation of the Logos, cannot endure, is a feeling that I have simply because I do belong to *this* civilization. It is an ineradicable, but not therefore a reliable, intuition. That may be a pretty good definition of a faith. In the sense defined, I have a faith that no society of man can endure without the Logos. But this faith is a faith that would be derisory and meaningless if it did not issue in works. To wait supinely till the sub-human society collapses because it has expelled the Logos, is to betray the

Logos : it is to join in the movement to expel the Logos.

The Logos may or may not be eternal : I do not and cannot know. Neither can any man. But what I can and do know, and what any man can know, is that the Logos is in peril as it has never been before in the history of the civilization of which it is the sign. Never before has the Logos civilization been confronted by so bitter, so determined, so subtle and so powerful an enemy—an enemy who turns the very prestige of the Logos into an instrument for its own destruction, by invoking Science to destroy the conditions without which Science cannot exist. Never before has the Logos civilization had so many traitors within the gates, working to destroy the twofold conscience and to make the false appear the true, and the wrong the right, in the interest of the deified lawlessness of the Communist state.

The danger is the greater because the forces of the Logos-civilization are divided. Religion and Science are still dilatory in making the advance towards the position where conscience and reason are veritably at one, which is the position where it is understood that the free society is necessary to both. The most powerful of the Christian Churches—the Roman Catholic—has an equivocal record as regards the free society ; and though there are now signs of a radical change in its attitude, it is not unreasonable that old and justifiable suspicions of it should persist. After all, the freedom of the twofold conscience had to be established in the teeth of the bitter opposition of the Roman Catholic Church. The wheel has indeed turned full circle : today the Roman Catholic Church has its greatest strength in the free society of the United States, because it is a free society. But not until the Roman Church withdraws its great influence from support of the dictatorship and exerts it for the establishment of a free society in Spain can we be certain that the change of heart and mind is complete. It will be disastrous if, on the continent of Europe, the opposition between the Logos-civilization and the new Communist organism assumes the distorted form of an opposition between Roman Catholicism and Communism, for in that case the hearts and minds of many of the most convinced

defenders of the Logos-civilization will be divided, knowing that in the ranks of the supporters of Roman Catholicism are some of the bitterest enemies of the free society. The truth is that Roman Catholicism does not really represent the Logos-civilization, nor can it do so until it has undergone a revolutionary change, by accepting its real position as an element—a precious and venerable element—in the Logos-civilization, and not as its custodian or guardian. That it is not, and cannot be.

But it is not inordinate to expect that the Roman Church will realize that its fate is bound up with the existence of the free society. Theoretically, a revival of Catholic authoritarianism may seem to offer an alternative form of social organization to that of the new Communist organism; but in practice it would be either a totally irrelevant archaism, which could endure—as in Spain—only by permission of the free societies, or a new totalitarianism. The only vital form of religious society which can now be opposed to the deified society of Communism is the free society. That really does represent the Logos-civilization: for it is based on the unity of the twofold conscience. It is, essentially, a religious and Christian society because it is founded on the responsible freedom of the individual in a real brotherhood; it is essentially a society of reason, because it practises complete freedom of inquiry. In it is acknowledged the truth that freedom of thought is really possible only within an essentially Christian society. No society can be essentially Christian in which freedom of thought is not possible; and no thought can be really free which does not accept the necessity of the essentially Christian society as the condition of its own existence.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE REDISCOVERY OF CHRISTIANITY

IN the free society the Logos-civilization reaches a consummation. It discovers and creates its true form of political organization—the means to its own full self-expression. A new phase of human history therefore begins. The question is whether the Logos-civilization can maintain itself in the new dimension of existence which it has opened for itself by creating the free society. That it now becomes immensely vulnerable is obvious. The period of unconscious incubation is ended; all the elements of external authority are discarded; now it must exist by conscience and reason alone. The life of full freedom and full responsibility begins, at the new level of experience at which society takes precedence of the individual person. To believe, as many sincerely do, that this change means a diminution of the freedom and responsibility of the individual person, is a profound mistake. Firstly, because the criterion applied is, invariably, a false criterion derived from a brief and altogether abnormal period of freedom without responsibility which immediately preceded the final form of the free society; secondly, because the free society is the creation of conscience, and if the nature of conscience be considered, it is evident that it demands that anarchic freedom shall be limited by responsibility in order that it may become true freedom. That this limitation of irresponsible freedom by responsibility should be applied primarily by the State is inevitable, in the early stages of the free society; but the State in the free society is truly representative of its citizens, and, as the sense of responsibility grows, we may expect that the functions and scope of the state will diminish.

The free society is, at present, in its infancy. It is only at the threshold of experience; and it rests entirely with

itself whether it will retain the capacity for experience. If lawless appetite abuses or revokes the fundamental freedoms, the capacity for experience will be gone, and the vehicle of the Logos-civilization will perish, by being transformed into a vehicle of the lawless "civilization" which is its mortal enemy. The temptations of that false civilization will probably be at their height during the most vulnerable years of the new form of the Logos-civilization, when the new morality which it must develop in order to live is still in embryo and struggling into consciousness: when the new educational inspiration, based on the new understanding of the nature of the free society, is only sporadically manifest and has not attained the strength of a tradition. During this period the temptations will be great indeed, for, while the free society is unconscious of its own nature, and only partially aware of the self-discipline of thought and action which it demands, traitors to it will be invested with authority and permitted, in the name of reason and science, to sap the foundations of reason and science, and in the name of conscience to destroy conscience.

Perhaps nothing is more desperately needed in this vulnerable chrysalis phase of the new form of the Logos-civilization than the birth of a new corporate conscience among its intellectuals, by virtue of which they will dedicate themselves to the twofold task of expounding the obligations of the free society and unmasking those intellectuals who, whether wittingly or not, are false to them. These are to be found on the Right as well as the Left, in Religion as well as in Science, in those who exalt authority as well as those who despise it, in those who take the free society for granted as well as those who deride it. For the new form of the Logos-civilization has to be positively affirmed against a new power that would annihilate it; and, though it would be contradictory to its own nature to attempt to suppress the irresponsible and lawless thought which weakens it, unless it issues in specific political activities which are plain treason to the free society, it is only the more necessary that a canon of responsible and lawful thinking should be established whereby the aberrations can be arraigned before the conscience and reason of all.

I have coined the phrase the Logos-civilization, because it seems to express more compactly than any other the unity of the religious-moral conscience and the conscience of thought towards which the civilization we inherit has been striving during all its life, and which finds in the free society the only possible medium for its full realization. I have used the word Logos because it has a unique position both in the Greek and the Christian tradition, whose interpenetration is the source of the intellectual and spiritual particularity of our civilization. They penetrated one another at two crucial moments: first, when the Christian religion blossomed, by the aid of Greek philosophy, into a theology; and second, when, at the fall of Byzantium, a second and fuller impregnation of mediæval Christendom by the Greek spirit created the historical consciousness, which is the final intellectual form of the synthesis of the religious-moral conscience and the conscience of thought. When this intellectual form emerges, the demand is made that the Logos shall be revealed in the process of history. The question: "Is there a God?" is substantially, though not essentially, changed into the question: "Is there a meaning in history?"

Nor is there anything arbitrary in attributing to the free society the importance which is here attributed to it as the culmination of the Logos-civilization. Not only is it the plain fact that the free societies of Britain and America are now the chief defenders of that civilization, and the relative stability of those societies is envied by the European peoples; but it seems evident that the free society can be understood only as the working-out of the principles of the Logos-civilization, and as the outcome of the effort to discover the form of society which those principles demand if the process of working them out is to continue. The free society is either the finale of the Logos-civilization, or the beginning of a new and more splendid manifestation of it. And the fact, which we have demonstrated at length in earlier chapters, that the free societies are now compelled as by an inward law, to seek to abolish war and, as the means to that end, to establish a free society of nations, and thereby to universalise the free society, is simply a proof

that the free societies have now become the chosen instruments of the dynamic of the Logos-civilization.

For it is manifest that the Logos-civilization must have, for its final *raison d'être*, the abolition of war. So long as war exists within it, there is a contradiction at its heart. As the Logos-civilization has become penetrated by the historical consciousness, so the anomaly of war has become more evident and disturbing. In its halcyon and deceptive penultimate phase, described in our first chapter, a concerted effort was made to rationalize war, in balance-of-power politics, as the final court of appeal in the rough justice of history. But such a rationalization of war was superficial and wholly precarious, being based on the premiss that the just claims of a nation were in proportion to its military strength, which was in turn a reflection of its productive capacity. It was an attempt to rationalize a profound irrationality merely by recognizing its existence. Men said in effect: "Since war is, in reality, the ultimate arbiter of 'justice' between the nations, we will anticipate the decisions of war by our diplomacy, and so avoid the war itself." The precarious construction broke down. Just as the historical consciousness was asking more and more pertinaciously what was the justification of war and coming nearer to the answer that it could be justified only if it were used to establish the peace of the world by fighting the nations which broke it, more and more savage and exhausting wars devastated the world. Doctrines suddenly emerged which challenged the whole foundation of the Logos-civilization: the naïve but murderous Fascist-Nazi doctrine that war was, in itself, the supreme good; the more refined Communist doctrine that the dynamic of history was contained in the class-war, which must be waged with conscious ruthlessness until the proletariat was universally victorious. Both these doctrines originated in Germany, where they were, in some senses, antipodal, but really complementary. Marxist Socialism was among other things a revolt against Prussian militarism and the political backwardness and humility of the German people which enabled the military caste to dominate them; Nazism unleashed Prussian militarism from its traditional restraints.

But, naïve in the one case, and recondite in the other, both doctrines alike conceived war as inevitable. Prussian militarism, both in its melodramatic Kaiser Wilhelm phase and its final demoniac phase under Hitler, was a plain reversion to barbarism. Marxist Socialism made use of the ambiguous Logos philosophy of Hegel to thrust the Logos clean out of history, by a reversion to chiliastic Judaism. The despised and rejected Proletariat, by liberating itself, was to liberate all mankind and carry it at one bound into the millennium, by means of universal war.

Both doctrines struck at the heart of the Logos-civilization, one with a primitive ferocity, the other much more subtly : both, by consecrating war as the necessary means of unfolding the meaning of history, ended by deifying sheer power—the annihilation alike of conscience and reason. The Logos-civilization, on the other hand, is committed to the abolition of war because the abolition of war is necessary in order that the meaning of history can be maintained and developed on a new plane of significance. It is perfectly true that the history of the Logos-civilization has, in fact, been largely a history of wars. Nevertheless, it has been steadily striving to conquer war. First, within the domestic society, where it has evolved the pregnant and astonishing principle of willing submission of the minority to the majority based on the confidence that the majority will be constrained by conscience to grant full freedom to the minority to become the majority. That is a victory over war which is totally different from the enforcement of "peace" by an overwhelming power. That merely suppresses war, and by its mere suppression, impoverishes society. But the free society transmutes war into a creative rivalry for the common good. Second, even though it has done it so far only half-consciously, and in some respects only half-heartedly, the free society has striven for the abolition of international war. War is already a moral impossibility between America and Britain, or America and Canada,¹ or Britain and France : and a moral impossibility means an absolute impossibility. For only when war between two nations is a moral impossibility is it really impossible. This the free societies have achieved as between themselves,

simply because conscience has become powerful within them. This positive achievement of theirs, like the achievement of tolerance within the free societies, is the more impressive because it is so little regarded. It is only "natural"; it is taken for granted. It is the more marvellous.

Moreover, the free societies have taken all the initiatives that have been taken to create a free society of nations. No doubt they failed badly in their understanding of their positive obligations to the League of Nations. It is the fate of a new and necessary creative political idea to suffer temporary set-back as it seeks to embody itself in an institution. But the America that repudiated President Wilson in 1919 follows his lead in 1946.

Just as within the free society it is forbidden by conscience that the class-struggle shall become the class-war, so in international relations the free societies strive to prevent tensions from developing into war. War has already in fact become for them essentially a police-operation, a means to defend peace. The cynicism that is fashionable today concerning the motives of the free societies in making war derives mainly from the philosophy and propaganda of Communism. To repudiate this cynicism as vehemently as it needs to be repudiated does not involve us in holding that the free societies are so many Galahads, whose hearts are pure and their motives blameless and unmingled. But the plain fact is that they have a conscience about war, and accept the necessity of it only with extreme reluctance. The idea that war is the necessary means for manifesting the meaning of history is totally abhorrent to them.

In this attitude, they are the true heirs of the Logos-civilization, whose mission it is to seek the truth, and establish a human society in which the truth can be sought. But what if the truth concerning human history and the destiny of man is that it *is* a process of incessant war? The answer is simple. This *cannot* be the truth, because it is a truth which destroys itself. If this were true, there would be no truth. There would be no society which it could inhabit. All human societies would become mere animal organisms for waging war. Ultimately, one would

triumph. Then, since the truth of human history is that it is a process of incessant war, either the war would become an internal war in the vast world-tyranny, or the truth would cease to be true. But what new truth could supersede it? In what society would it be sought?

In order that it shall exist, truth needs a society in which it shall be sought and manifested. That society must be a society of peace—of creative peace established by a common conscience, a common sense of obligation to seek the truth. The Logos-civilization is the civilization in which man has slowly become more and more conscious of the obligation to seek the truth and to establish a society in which it can be sought. Its history is the history of a long struggle of human life towards rationality and meaning, which is achieved in a truth-seeking society. Deprive humanity of that consummation, that entry into the new life of increasing and ultimately universal dedication to truth, and it is plunged into a fathomless abyss, an incomprehensible void where neither truth nor meaning can exist.

Man wills truth, but not according to his own will. He obeys a will greater than his own in willing the truth. In so doing he obeys God, and he reveals God. By willing truth, he wills the society in which truth can be sought. He wills, therefore, a society of peace: a society of peace for the sake of truth, in order that the Logos may be more fully revealed.

The more fully we appreciate that the free society is a society of men dedicated to seeking the truth, by means of the conscience that compels respect for the fellow-member as a potential vehicle of truth; the more fully we appreciate that this society is the culmination of a long historical process, in which the Christian insight has been married to the Greek insight and both together have sought to establish a society in which they could exist in unity: the more apparent it becomes that the intuition of those who made the revolutionary declaration that in Jesus of Nazareth the Logos became flesh and blood was a marvellous prophetic intuition of the truth. He emerges, indeed, as the central figure of the Logos-civilization: in himself, by his act in gathering together the new community of the sons of God,

by his faith that in so doing he was doing his Father's will, by his knowledge that he himself and not another was He that should come, by his submission to death rather than deny that knowledge; and, as he has been understood, as the incarnation of the Logos, the key to the meaning of history.

The affirmation that the Logos must be embodied is common both to the free society and to its mortal enemy. Both claim, essentially, to be the embodiment of the Logos, because both claim to be the unique instrument and vehicle of the further meaning of history. Or—to be more exact—the Communist society explicitly makes this claim: it is the first article of the Communist creed. I have (I believe) the honour of being the first to make the claim explicitly on behalf of the fully free society. In the days when the free society was in its first travail, its champions were not so modest as they are today. Milton was trumpet-tongued in the mighty claims he made for it. But today the free society is on the defensive, uncertain of its high calling, and some of its members have already turned towards the new Star of the East, because of its colossal claim.

Against that monstrous claim, I set the claim of the free society. I claim that it sustains the meaning of history, whereas the Communist society annihilates that meaning. I claim that the conscience which unites the free society as a body of men dedicated to seeking truth is the only power which can give meaning to history. I claim that this conscience is essentially nothing other than the love of God and obedience to His will which were supremely manifest in Jesus Christ. I claim therefore that the free society is indeed the body of Christ in the sense in which the Christian Church—even though utterly divided against itself—has claimed to be that body.

That the free society is largely unconscious that it is the Christian society, I willingly admit. It is obvious. But if we have to choose between them, it is better to do the works than to know the doctrine. Nevertheless, I think the time is at hand when, if the free society is to continue to do the works, it must know the doctrine. I think it will rediscover the doctrine. And it is better so. It is better

that the free society, as a community of truth-seekers, should first seek the truth about itself, and come to the knowledge that it is a community of truth-seekers, dedicated to that search by the conscience which binds it together, and without which it cannot exist. In seeking the truth about itself, it cannot fail to come to the knowledge and the love of God. It will not seek the truth about itself, unless conscience remains so strong in it that it remains a free society. And conscience will have to become far stronger within it than it is today, to enable it to remain a free society. Its members will have to wake the slumbering conscience in them to new activity, revive the dead conscience in them into new life, refine the active conscience in them into new integrity, if the free society is to maintain itself against its internal and external adversaries.

Since, without that reawakening and purification of conscience, the free society will perish, and since only by means of it can it endure, we may say for certain that the free society will either perish, or come to the knowledge and love of God. But it must come to the knowledge and love of God in its own way, by means of its own experience and its own self-knowledge. God must be re-discovered. He will be re-discovered by being re-asserted, in the moral will of the free society to remain alive. To require of the free society that it should subscribe to Christianity, as it now exists, would be preposterous. Christianity, as it now exists, still profoundly divided between the Christianity of conscience and the Christianity of authority, is less Christian than the free society; and more remote than it from the knowledge and the love of God, and the fellowship of His Son.

As the free society is the consummation of the Logos-civilization, the culmination of the process whereby the Christian community has passed outside the tutelage of the Church and become a political society organized for the purpose of seeking the truth, so we may expect of it a re-affirmation of the Christian verity—a really new affirmation of it, in the pristine candour of a newly apprehended truth, purified of much strange accretion and magic and superstition; but not, as too many in the past have imagined, a

purification by impoverishment that takes away all the accumulated richness of devotion and imagination. It is not the mission of the free society to expurgate the Christian religion, or even to find the common denominator between its discrepant manifestations, but to lay upon all the Christian sects the duty of becoming centres of illumination whence a deeper understanding of the free society may be disseminated. They should accept the fact that the free society is, in itself, a religious society, and a Christian society, and they should have the imagination to perceive that to the degree to which they fraternally co-operate with one another in spreading a sense of obligation to the free society *for its own sake* they will be extending the possibility of an entirely new response to the Christian message. Let them be content to expound and uphold the significance of a truth-seeking society, in the confidence that, since the Christian religion is true, such a society cannot fail to re-discover it. If they have not this confidence, let them bethink themselves why it is lacking.

The reason why it is lacking is that the Christian Churches do not present their doctrine as an answer to the search for truth, as a contemporary mind experiences it. They do not invite the attention of that conscience which seeks "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," for they regard that conscience as in itself suspect and "irreligious," whereas it is, in fact, by far the most deeply religious element in modern man, and the very basis of his necessary return to Christianity. But, in order to appeal to it, the professional Christian mind must have shared the experience; it must have started, as it were, from scratch, emptied itself of all its reservations, and plunged into the search for truth unknowing where it would arrive. That is very hard for professional Christians, for the majority of whom Christianity has always been a foregone conclusion. Yet it is precisely that which sets the great gulf between the Christian apologist and the contemporary mind, for which the very notion of a foregone conclusion is itself essentially irreligious. It is faking the evidence: an offence against morality.

Is a Christianity—or a Christian apologetic—conceivable

which would not merely avoid this offence, but regard it with the same horror as the modern mind regards it? In other words, can we conceive a Christianity which is prepared to lose its life to save it? That, I suppose, is really the demand which this book makes on the Christian Churches, when it calls upon them to identify themselves with the free society and to see in it a more authentically Christian society than they are themselves: because the only bond that sustains it is conscience, more directly and continuously dependent on God, and more completely dedicated to the revelation of His purpose in making men free. The free society establishes man in the freedom which Jesus sought to bestow on him.

With all its crudities and imperfections and ignorances the free society is a new and marvellous creation. It is a brotherhood: a society of love, whatever the cynics may say. The presence of love makes it possible for them to utter their cynicism. Because it is a society of love, it is a truth-seeking society. Whether we regard love, or whether we regard truth as the one thing needful; whether we are primarily Christian or primarily Greek in our allegiance: in the free society we experience and, as members of it, we are called to understand, that love and truth are entirely dependent on each other. The truth cannot be sought or found save in a society which is knit together by love; love is outcast save in a society which grants men freedom to seek the truth. The free society is that brotherhood of man in which the identity of love and truth is demonstrated.

Because of that, it is precious; because of that, it is vulnerable—terribly vulnerable—vulnerable as the newborn babe it veritably is. If only it can grow to manhood, what simple wonders will it not achieve! If only it can become, gradually, penetrated by self-knowledge, more and more consciously sustained by that identity of love and truth which it unconsciously incarnates, it will be the centre whence the world will be re-inspired. For on the progressive revelation, through concrete societies of men, of the identity of love and truth the meaning of history depends. The consciousness and conscience which can be nurtured in the free society alone can give and receive meaning, to and

from the history that is past, making the past live in the present and create the future. Only where the identity of love and truth is lived, as it is lived (however ignorantly) in the free society, is the future at peace with the past.

That is the meaning of the Logos: that the future shall be at peace with the past. Where the future is at peace with the past, there is the Logos. It means that there is an end to the collapse of civilizations, because there *must* be an end to it. The collapse of civilizations is a meaningless process unless there is one which discovers the secret of life everlasting: a civilization which cannot forget the past, and has no need to forget; a civilization which would betray itself if it forgot the past; a civilization which knows that it dares not and must not collapse. There is only one, and there can be only one such civilization: that which has come to know, and to live by, the identity of truth and love. The civilization which threatens it is one in which its truth forbids love and demands hatred: hatred of the past, hatred of fellow-man. Its truth would destroy the possibility of truth. It denies the Logos.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM OF THE FREE
SOCIETY

ON the whole, if one looks soberly at the situation, one must pronounce that the chances that the free society will survive in Britain are not too rosy. But to talk in terms of its "survival" at all is a mistake. The free society will not "survive"; it will be reborn, or it will perish. It must enter upon an altogether more glorious existence, or decay.

A more glorious existence does not mean a more comfortable existence. Perhaps the gravest difficulty with which the free society has to contend, at least in Britain, is that its growth to completion during the 19th century was accompanied by an unexampled growth of material prosperity. This prosperity was not adventitious. There was, as we have shown, an intimate connection between the advance to the politically free society and the upsurge of scientific invention, inspired by the spirit of free inquiry, and carried forward by the immense liberation of human energies caused by the belief that the individual person "had God behind him." By the prevalence of this religious belief Britain was enabled to become the pioneer in modern technology and to lead the way into the new machine-civilization. Thus she acquired, for the best part of a century, a virtual monopoly in the new techniques. That position she has now had to surrender to America. But the memory of her experience of industrial and commercial supremacy dies hard.

During that period the free society in Britain was an easy thing. It gave men—or the new middle-class—the best of both worlds: a sense of religious "election," and what seemed unbounded material prosperity; and it was difficult, and almost unseemly, to distinguish the one from the other. Uncanonical scriptures were invented, full of congenial

texts like "God helps those who help themselves." London expanded by the square mile into street after street of tall houses which could not possibly be run without two, three or four servants. The lower classes were kept at the job by the constant threat of unemployment and abject misery. The blessed "harmony of interests" was a going concern. With a minimum of interference, the social and economic system whirled busily on, at the cost of the workers' happiness. Religion and the middle class were both secure. It was the bourgeois paradise. Men were at their ease in Zion.¹⁰

Two world-wars finally shattered its apparent security. The workers, who had to be called in to defend the country, began to assert their political power. In thirty years they have done so completely. One last effort to keep them in their place took the form of Mr. Neville Chamberlain's "National Government." With a right instinct, he aimed at keeping the nation out of war, because that was the only way to prevent the workers from becoming fully conscious of their power. But the aim itself was chimerical. In Europe new societies, with new forms of social organization, had arisen which violently rejected the economic automatism of the free society, because the workers could no longer be disciplined by the threat of unemployment. If unemployment was the price the workers must pay for the free society, they would have none of it. They preferred authoritarianism and full employment to the free society and unemployment. That was the elemental urge which put so many of the workers behind Nazism and Communism in Germany. Philosophically, Nazism was a less formidable movement than Communism, because it was devoid of universalism. But, for the worker, it was the same thing. And, like Communism, it declared that the meaning of history was incarnate in an aggressive nation-state under an inspired and infallible leader.

The apparent philosophical superiority of Communism was, in reality, due to the fact that in Russia the pseudo-Marxists had a *tabula rasa* to work on. The highly developed industrial society which, according to Marx, was the milieu indispensable to the emergence of "scientific"

socialism, did not exist in Russia. Consequently, the theory of the Russian "Marxists" was completely divorced from practice, in Marx's sense of the word. Lenin and Stalin were primarily authentic successors of Peter the Great, engaged like him in imposing on the inert body of the Russian people the most up-to-date Western theory of social organization. They were in the happy position of being able to preserve their theory in all its dogmatic purity precisely because there were no facts with which it must be kept in contact, and contaminated. If there had really been a proletariat in Russia, as Marx conceived the proletariat, the theory of Communism would, by this time, have become either as fantastic as the theory of Nazism, or as self-contradictory as the theory of Communists in the West.

In other words, Fascism is the effective form taken by Communism in a highly developed industrial society, as was made manifest by the pragmatic combination of Communists and Nazis in Germany when they co-operated in destroying its parliamentary institutions. The discontent of industrial unemployment provides the dynamic of an authentic Marxist social revolution; and industrial unemployment exists only in a highly industrialized society. In Germany it was solved by the abolition of the nascent free society. The Nazis actually administered the *coup de grâce*; but the German Communists themselves proposed nothing different. Even the fact that the Nazis overcame unemployment in Germany by intensive preparation for war did not distinguish them from the German Communists who, if they had managed to seize power, would have been compelled to do the same thing. For their Communist Germany would have been regarded immediately by the Western democracies as a more dangerous enemy than Nazi Germany itself.

So, in bare economic terms, the crucial question is: Can the free society solve the problem of unemployment and remain a free society? The answer is: It can, but only on one condition: namely that the social and economic discipline—the compulsion to work reasonably hard—hitherto imposed by the threat of unemployment, is replaced by a new voluntary discipline. There are several forms that this

new voluntary discipline could take, without obviously offending against the moral principles of the free society.

A majority government might impose, in time of peace and for peaceful purposes, the kind of industrial discipline which was imposed during the war. It is fallacious to suppose that what is called "industrial conscription" is necessarily in contradiction with the free society, whose fundamental and inalienable freedom is political and not industrial. Provided "industrial conscription" was imposed by a constitutional government and, however reluctantly, accepted by the workers, it would be entirely compatible with the free society.

But it would be practically impossible to work unless it were accompanied by a system of approximately equal rewards in all occupations. "Industrial conscription" of the kind accepted during the war-emergency would not be found tolerable for long in a peace-time free society. That was, essentially, a war-time emergency measure which was based on the preservation of the economic pattern of the pre-war society, chiefly because it was felt to be too difficult to improvise something better. But the pre-war society has now gone for ever; its economic pattern, preserved from collapse only by rearmament for war, is entirely obsolete. Any conception of "industrial conscription" which looks backward to the war-time system is illusory. "Industrial conscription" may seem tolerable enough to those who are not industrial workers themselves, because they have this obsolete pattern in mind. "Industrial conscription" is not for them. But any form of "industrial conscription" which would be acceptable in the free society at peace—or, for that matter, at war, in the future—would be for them also. "Occupational conscription" would therefore be a more realistic phrase to describe it.

Occupational conscription with approximately equal rewards for every occupation seems very Utopian. It may appear less so when we consider the practical alternative. The problem is, as men are now beginning to see, to get the more onerous occupations adequately manned and conscientiously worked. That is the urgent practical form taken by the central problem: which is to establish social

justice in the free society. Unless it does that, the free society in its new form cannot endure. The only social discipline to which the workers, in the long run, or even the relatively short one, will consent, or can be expected to consent, must be based on social justice. Social justice is thought to demand the virtual abolition of unemployment as a means of industrial discipline; economic necessity requires the establishment of industrial discipline. The occupations, however onerous, which are essential to the economic life of society must be manned. The only way of achieving this, it seems, if a system of occupational conscription and equal rewards is rejected, is to make the onerous and unpopular occupations economically so attractive that the necessary flow of labour is induced towards them.

The nature of this alternative needs to be faced realistically, in the circumstances of a fully free society, in which the industrial workers necessarily have the deciding voice. It has to be remembered that all occupations will be increasingly regarded as on a level; so that it is not merely a question of paying coal-miners and agricultural labourers better than engineers or distributive workers, but of paying them better than doctors and civil servants, and even company directors and politicians. Certainly it is unrealistic to imagine that the free society will maintain for long the magical distinction between the professions and the occupations, in virtue of which the former are remunerated on a totally different scale from the latter.

But it is very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to imagine a hierarchy of wage and salary rates established such as would effectively induce an adequate flow of labour into all the occupations essential to society; and such a solution, whether practicable or not, is ethically fantastic. It would be the enthronement of materialism as the only dynamic of the free society: that is to say, in the name of freedom, the ethical basis of freedom would be deliberately demolished. Thus, when one considers this solution realistically, its initial plausibility quickly fades, and it becomes clear that it is even more impracticable than the former Utopian plan of approximately equal rewards for every occupation.

That this plan is Utopian, in the sense that it is not likely to be adopted by the free society in Britain in the near future, may be cheerfully admitted. The question is whether this is not the only final solution to the problem, and therefore one towards which the responsible consciences in the free society must strive.

Already, it is clear that the urge towards educational equality will gather force. It is elemental, it is just, and cannot be arrested. But educational equality in a society where occupations have differential rewards must tend to the general debasement of education. Education for its own sake is inconceivable under such a system; for the educational process must become one of all-in competition for economic advantage. But why should a boy who fails in this degrading and immoral race be economically penalized for the whole of his life? It seems plain that the only way to establish the practice of disinterestedness in education, by which we mean the constant endeavour to elicit and employ the pupil's latent capacities as a member of the free society, is to establish the principle that whatever occupation he is found best fitted to pursue, provided he does it conscientiously and well, is of equal importance to the community and is deserving of equal reward.

It may seem strange, at first sight, to make the effect on the educational system of the free society the criterion by which its economic system must be determined. But is not this of the very essence of the free society, as its nature is revealed to our analysis? The free society must be an educated society. Unless it is that, it cannot hope to endure. The central core of its education, as we have seen, must be education into the nature of the free society and the awakening of the conscience which is its root. But how can conscience be awakened by an educational system which must conform to the principle that personal economic advantage is the chief end of human life? In order not to be contradictory and nonsensical the educational system of a free society must absolutely repudiate this principle.

It is difficult to empty our minds of the comfortable and convenient notions which prevailed in the bourgeois phase of the free society. Then wealth, acquired indeed without

excessive ability, but not without ability, gave the entrée to the ruling class; and the famous, or notorious, dual system of British education was devised—a good education for the rich, and a cheap one for the poor. The system worked well enough while the large majority of people of both classes were persuaded that wealth was the rough index of capacity. But now the system is being overthrown. The process of its supersession is only beginning, though the changes already introduced, with general acclaim, are pretty revolutionary. Still, few people have asked themselves the simple question: If a dual system of education reflected the economic fact of two classes, what class-system is congruous with educational equality? It seems clear that educational equality must necessarily lead to a classless society. Without that consummation it is a sheer illogicality, so unnatural that the complete debasement of education would be its consequence.

At present the free society of Britain is in a phase of revolutionary transition; and the most striking feature about it is the lack of consciousness of the nature of the change. Britain may be likened to a woman in the actual travail of birth: there has been almost a lapse from consciousness. Just as the working-class, though it is in possession of political power, is, on the whole, behaving as though no such revolutionary change had occurred, so the fundamental contradiction between educational equality and a society of differentiated rewards passes almost unnoticed.

After all, it may be objected, America flourishes exceedingly on precisely this contradiction. Certainly America is prodigiously wealthy, as wealthy relatively to the rest of the modern world as Britain herself was relatively to the world of the 19th century. But whether America is flourishing is another matter. American education is not flourishing. It is convulsed by a profound and openly acknowledged crisis, which derives directly from the co-existence of educational equality and a society of extravagantly differentiated economic rewards. If we may accept the judgment of some of her most conscientious educators, this has corrupted education in America, and prostituted it most wholly to the service of materialism.

That will happen in England, if the attempt is made to reconcile educational equality with the continuation of a class-society. America may be able to stand it for a time because of her economic prosperity; she will not be able to stand it for long. Even now the political irresponsibility of Americans is said to be largely the result of the inward decay of her educational system. The tradition of learning—of the humanities—has gone; and no new architectonic conception of education has arisen to take its place. Perhaps America will have time to create one. But, in England, if education were to suffer a like retrogression, it would be fatal.

In England, however, the transition towards a classless society has begun. The workers have political power. But they do not know what to do with it. The classless society is a vague slogan for them, much more intimately connected with what, according to the Scriptures, is eventually going to happen in Soviet Russia than with what has actually happened in Britain. Yet the classless society is far nearer in Britain than it is in Russia, and far more probable. For it is indeed the only final solution of the economic problems of a fully free society. If Britain remains a free society, she will be under compulsion to move towards that goal. For, as we have seen, the one chance of her continuing to exist as a free society is a rebirth of conscience, with a new social awareness; and such a conscience cannot avoid clearly positing economic equality as the necessary goal of a free and just society.

It is futile to say that it will not work; if it will not work the free society will not work either. If the free society remains free, it will be because it is steadily and ever more consciously moving towards economic equality. Conversely, that movement will be stopped only by abandoning the free society for authoritarianism. Indeed, from this angle, the free society could be defined as a society in which economic equality will become practicable. Utopian? The free society is itself a Utopian adventure, if by Utopian we mean dependent on a revolutionary advance in social morality. It can be freely admitted that, if economic equality were introduced to-morrow, or indeed in the next

ten or twenty years, society would simply collapse. Equally, since it would have to be imposed by an authoritarian government—for neither Labour nor the Conservatives are in any way prepared for it—to suppose economic equality introduced immediately is to suppose the abolition of the free society itself. All we are saying is that, if the free society is to remain free, it will have to approach continually closer to economic equality for all; and it will have to remain “a going concern” during the process of moral and economic change. You will never be able to kindle a new social conscience in the workers unless you set before them the concrete vision of a totally different society from this one. On the other hand, you will never be able to compel them to work, except by introducing the methods of totalitarianism. In the last resort this dilemma is unescapable. A free society must be constantly tending towards a just society, or it is doomed.

But, it may be asked, is economic equality just? From the point of view of this book, the question is really meaningless. For social justice, as we have said, consists in the social conditions and institutions which the free society must establish in order to remain a free society. And I am convinced, and I believe I have demonstrated, that economic equality is one of these. Economic equality may prove to be impracticable. I cannot say. But if it proves to be impracticable, then the free society also will be proved to be impracticable. Again, I cannot say. I can only repeat that the practicability of the free society depends on an effort of the moral will. If men and women are incapable of making it—there is no more to be said. It will be the darkest tragedy that has ever engulfed the human race. But if, as I still believe, men and women—above all, British men and British women—are capable of making the moral effort necessary to maintain the free society, then they will certainly become capable of doing their duty under conditions of economic equality.

Truly, an immense and novel effort at “education” is required. But it is only the same effort that is required for the maintenance of the free society in its familiar reality. Economic equality is not another more bitter pill we have

to swallow: it is included in the original pill. A free society that is capable of retaining its freedom, will become, by that very fact, capable of economic equality. And those who are morally incapable of accepting a society of economic equality will be found incapable of defending the free society. It is not the freedom of the free society that they love, but its opportunities of wealth and power; and when those opportunities are denied them, they will turn against the free society. Unless, of course, they discover, when the crucial moment comes, that they were ignorant of the God they worshipped in their secret hearts; and that rather than turn traitor to the free society they will turn their backs on Mammon.

The truth is that the free society of Britain is in such a strait that she can escape from it only by setting her face steadily towards the new Jerusalem. Unless we apply to it the solvent of a complete moral revolution the problem of social discipline will be found entirely untractable. A complete moral revolution sounds very dramatic, melodramatic even. But the life of a society is not as the life of an individual, and the complete moral revolution must take at least a generation to be fully accomplished. But to accomplish even that requires a moral revolution in many individuals now. They cannot seize power and impose a new conditioning upon the new generation, as the totalitarians do; they can only act upon men's consciences. That is all they can do. But that they must do. And, above all, they must cease to pretend that anything less than a moral revolution is required. There is no technical trick by which the necessity of moral revolution can be evaded: no trick of nationalization, or financial control, or currency reform, or planning. They are all camouflage: a mere postponement of the day of reckoning so that it will be only the more fearful when it comes.

CHAPTER XXVI

ECONOMIC EQUALITY THE GOAL

IF we look at the situation of Britain soberly, it is desperate. No honest doctor could give a favourable prognosis of the outcome. Not to prophesy the worst requires ignorance, or dishonesty—or faith. Simply to say, as we have hitherto done, that the problem of social discipline must be solved by the process of trial and error, which is possible only in the free society, though it is true enough on its own level, is palpably inadequate to the situation in which the free society of Britain is now caught. Had Britain been better prepared, morally, for the immense strains to which it will be continuously subjected from now onwards; if the conscience which is vital to the life of its free society had begun to be active, creating the new brotherhood which is required—then one might, with reasonable confidence, anticipate that Britain would honourably “muddle through.” But when one reads in a single issue of *The Times* that the secretary of the Miners’ Federation declares that the minimum yearly target of 200 million tons of coal is “physically impossible” (though it is nothing of the kind), and that the British army of occupation in Germany has made, by a manifestly immoral trading in cigarettes, an illicit profit of £58 million at the expense of the State, one is compelled to ask whether, far from there being an increase of consciousness and conscience in the free society of Britain, the morale of its members is not disintegrating, and whether there is not a danger of complete moral collapse. The heightened sense of the whole which we have posited as the necessary condition of the continuance of the free society seems itself to be Utopian.

As far as one can see at the moment of writing, the Labour Government of Britain is going to fail badly at the job of governing the country, primarily through its lack of the moral courage to tell the workers what their duty is, and to

say to them plainly that the country would be plunged in disaster if higher wages and shorter hours were conceded, or if, having been conceded, they were not withdrawn again. There would have been every justification for accompanying this doubtless discouraging honesty with the avowed determination to increase rather than decrease the contribution demanded of the relatively well-to-do. It was in fact highly desirable that there should be the nearest possible approximation to equality in sharing the hardship involved in struggling back to a pre-war standard of life after an utterly exhausting war, in which the same equality of hardship ought to have been enforced. It was not enforced. The great moral opportunity of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain was missed, and probably ignored. The romantic heroism of military battle against fearful odds appealed to Mr. Churchill; but not the more exacting heroism demanded by real equality of sacrifice in the moment of national peril. But it is doubtful whether it occurred even to his Labour colleagues in the National government to suggest it. Both alike—Conservative and Labour politicians—must be judged guilty not only of missing the great opportunity to lead the free society into the new path of social justice, and to inspire it, at a moment when it was receptive to inspiration, to meet the demands that would necessarily be made upon it; but also of indulging in unwarrantable illusions about Britain's power of economic recovery. The tradition of fecklessness which the Labour government took over from the National government was as much the creation of the Labour politicians as the Conservative. One can only say that, since Labour came into power, it has behaved with culpable irresponsibility, in its misjudgment of the economic situation of the country, and with an alarming moral cowardice when the facts became patent to all.

The responsibility on the Labour leaders in this country is heavy indeed. They decided that the general election should be held. There was no harm in that decision; and their victory might well have been wholly to the advantage of the country if it had been used to educate the workers into their new responsibility as the governors of Britain.

Instead, it was used in such a way as to weaken their morale, by encouraging them with false and delusive hopes of prosperity without hard work. The rank materialism which had increasingly displaced the original ethical appeal of British Socialism now presented a bill, which had to be paid. Socialism meant material benefits, the Labour propagandists had urged incessantly, though any honest propaganda for Socialism would have stressed the sacrifices that any social revolution in its initial stages—even in time of peace—must demand from the workers. No Labour leader, in my experience, ever told the Trade Unions that, under Socialism, their traditional sectional bargaining, their insistence on differential wage-rates between industry and industry, their technique of exploiting a labour shortage to force up wages, would be not merely an anomaly, but a social crime. Consequently, instead of leading the Trade Unions, the Labour politicians in power were led by them, with disastrous consequences. What earthly good to the free society, or to the workers themselves as a whole, can nationalization of an industry do if it has been represented to them for years as the royal road to more money for less work, instead of to a new responsible status for themselves as trustees of that industry for the community? So represented, nationalization becomes not an advance but a retrogression: superficial "rationalization" of the industry at the higher administrative levels serves as a temporary camouflage for the decay of the industry below. The nationalized industry becomes parasitic: a monopoly, which enables the workers in it to exploit the community at large—fellow-workers and all—by charging extortionate prices for their products or their services.

But, leaving aside the grandiose and demoralizing humbug of nationalization, when it has been thus radically misconceived, the mere adherence of the Trade Unions under a Socialist government to their traditional and obsolete practices, is bound to create an inflationary situation which will be fatal to the government and increase the hardships of the workers themselves: for, obviously, by enforcing higher wages and shorter hours without a corresponding increase of production, the members of the working-class

as a whole have more money and there are less goods to spend it on. This would be dangerous to a Socialism introduced when a peace-economy was fully restored ; at a time of universal shortage it is suicidal.' The only Socialism that is viable at all in such conditions is one which insists on hard work from everybody, and seeks its social justice by levelling wages as between industries, and levelling wages and salaries and profits as far as it can : by increasing production, lowering costs, and equalizing men's claims upon the increased production.

Nemesis is plainly at work when, under a Socialist government, in time of universal shortage and an unprecedented demand for labour, massive unemployment descends upon the country as it did in February, 1947. For a situation so fantastic the irresponsibility and immorality of Socialist propaganda over a period of years must bear most of the blame. In order to be popular, it sedulously avoided inculcating the necessity of a new social morality. It concentrated on denouncing the immorality of capitalism, and specifically of the " boss-class," and imbued the workers with a false and pernicious conception of their own moral rectitude. They, as they were, were good, simply because they were industrial workers, whereas the employers, simply because they were employers, were evil. It is almost incredible that a proposition so contrary to ordinary experience should have gained currency ; one would have thought that the robust common sense with which the British working-man is credited would have been proof against it. But gain currency it undoubtedly did. The ground had been prepared by the morally equivocal practices which the Trade Unions had been forced to adopt, under unrestricted capitalism—restriction of output, going slow, insistence on two men for a one-man job, and the like—in order to protect the workers from unemployment. Those methods of defence were unavoidable under the system ; but their effect on the morale of the workers was deplorable. Socialism, as it was presented to them, merely meant a continuation of the same thing : wages would be higher, the going still slower, the output even more restricted. This would produce the millennium.

A similar equivocation gained currency with regard to Soviet Russia. Here again it is almost incredible that a large number of British workers should at the same time have embraced the quasi-religious conviction that Soviet Russia was the workers' paradise, and completely ignored the facts that the Russian state enforced the most drastic compulsion of labour, and imposed, in its extreme forms, the practice which was anathema to the British Trade Unions—payment by results. Indeed, the moral contradiction is quite fantastic when the exploits of "Stakhanovism" in Russia are vastly admired by a considerable section of British coal-miners who, under a Socialist government, insist on a five-day week at a moment of the gravest national emergency directly caused by a shortage of coal. The state of mind implied in such confusion is almost beyond comprehension; and it compels the serious question whether it is not, in fact, sheer moral nihilism that has taken hold of one of the most important sections of the British working-class. Certainly, the idea that, under a Socialist government, on which the miners' Trade Union exerts a powerful influence, the coal miners are under a special obligation to work hard, if only to prevent the experiment in democratic Socialism from ignominious collapse, seems extraordinarily remote from the minds either of the miners' leaders or the rank and file. And yet, among the miners, Communist influence is exceptionally strong. Is Communist policy in England deliberately aimed at sabotage of democratic Socialism? If so, it is being highly successful.

The case of the coal-miners is, no doubt, extreme; but, since the industry happens to be the most vital of all, one is compelled to regard their nihilism as symptomatic. It makes no sense. It is the worst conceivable training for Communism, if that is what the miners really want. No Communist state would tolerate for one moment their lack of industrial discipline. On the other hand, it must ruin the chances of democratic Socialism. It is fatal to either form of "Socialism," and is completely irresponsible. Since the miners are not notoriously more nihilistic than other classes of workers, though they are more Communist, it is reasonable to deduce that the same temper is fairly

widespread among the industrial workers as a whole. If that is so, it is a grim look-out for the free society in Britain. We have seen that a definite increase of social conscience and consciousness is the indispensable condition of the survival of the free society. The evidence is that it is not increasing, but diminishing.

Moreover, the evidence also is that the actual behaviour of the Labour government has been such as to diminish rather than increase the conscience and consciousness of the free society in Britain. Whether through lack of understanding of the true situation of the country, or moral weakness, it has made no serious effort to lead the workers, but has suffered itself to be led by them, on the strange pretence that this is "democracy." Again and again, members of the Labour government have urged, in defence of their supineness before exorbitant wage-demands, that you cannot, in a free society, compel workers to work. They have announced this as an obvious truism, against which no argument was possible. But the truth is that a free society may have to compel its workers to work, in order to remain a free society. The responsibility of choice lies with them. Either they will do, voluntarily, the work that is necessary in order that the free society may exist; or they must be compelled to do it. And the duty of the government in a free society is to make them aware of the responsibility of their choice: to make it clear that, if they insist upon exorbitant and anti-social demands, they are compelling the government to compel them to work on just terms. Compulsion may take many forms. One of the least oppressive, in such an emergency as Britain now faces, would be the introduction of payment by results wherever practicable. Even so, it is quite possible that the Trade Unions, or the workers themselves, would refuse to work under such a system. But at some point a Socialist government in a free society must determine to govern, instead of being governed by, the workers: if not in the interests of the community as a whole, which ought to be the chief consideration, at least in the interests of the workers themselves, who will suffer as grievously as anybody from their refusal to accept the necessary social discipline.

Probably, there is no way now by which the Labour government can avert grave economic hardship, if not real economic disaster, from the country. Whether the experience of that economic hardship will teach the workers the necessity of industrial discipline, or whether it will increase the tendency to irresponsibility and nihilism among them, is any man's guess. But the responsibility for this perilous situation belongs largely to the leaders of Labour themselves: first, because of the irresponsibility of their own propaganda, which has for years been substantially dishonest, in that it has not dared to warn the workers or the Trade Union leaders that the introduction of Socialism would call not for less, but for more work from them; and, second, because of its moral cowardice in office, in not daring even to formulate the industrial policies required for the success of the experiment in Socialism. Thus the Labour leaders, instead of educating the workers of the country into a sense of their new obligations, have contributed to the decay of their old sense of obligation.

The failure of the experiment in democratic Socialism will be nothing for the Conservatives to congratulate themselves upon. It will be an unmitigated disaster both for this country and for the world. Indeed, unless the Conservatives themselves are prepared to carry the attempt at social justice forward, they will merely aggravate the chaos, which the Labour government will have precipitated. Probably, as we have already suggested, a new kind of coalition government will offer the only means of stabilizing a situation already compromised by the irresponsibility of both sides. For both political parties are equally surrendered to the fundamental vice which, if it is not eradicated, must eventually be fatal to the free society. That vice is materialism.

The defence of reasonable private property is a good thing; but it is an utterly different thing from the defence of riches. The Conservatives, pretending to defend the former, have always in fact defended the latter. They have defended the iniquities of the capitalist system, to protect themselves against which the Trade Unions have had to employ the essentially anti-social devices which have

now become second nature with the workers. If I have appeared to indict the Trade Unions and the Labour movement, it is because I am compelled to judge them by the high standards of the ideal of social justice which they profess to pursue ; but there is nothing that the workers have done, or failed to do, in the present crisis, which the employers have not done before them. It would be ludicrous to pretend that the Conservative party has displayed a greater loyalty to the community as a whole than the Labour party has done. If the workers are now exploiting it, the employers have done so for many years. They have had many opportunities and taken them all : the workers now have their first. It has occurred when the nation is in greater straits than ever before because, when a free society engages in total war, the workers necessarily become more conscious of their power, and more able to assert it. It cannot be reasonably expected that they should exercise it according to a higher standard of morality than their political and economic opponents obeyed in exercising theirs.

It cannot be reasonably expected ; nevertheless, the free society must demand it. This is the first crux. In reality, this always has been the crux of democratic Socialism, the practical possibility of which has always depended upon the establishment of a higher standard of social morality throughout the community, primarily, through the political agency of the working-class, secondarily, through the willingness of their political opponents to submit to their authority. But unless the higher standard of social morality is actually manifest in the policies of the working-class government and the conduct of the workers themselves, it cannot be expected that their political opponents will continue to submit for long to their authority. On the other hand, the political opponents of the working-class party cannot hope successfully to challenge its authority, in the free society, unless they themselves have adopted the higher social morality which the workers and their leaders have failed to display.

That is the second crux. Put in simple language, it means that, if the Conservatives are to offer themselves as

a positive alternative to the Labour government in Britain, they must be prepared and committed to be better Socialists than they. That does not mean that where the Labour party has nationalized four industries, the Conservatives must offer to nationalize eight. Nationalization is the mere husk of Socialism. There is no essential and indispensable mechanism of Socialism which, once erected, guarantees social justice. That is the fallacy of doctrinaire "scientific" Socialism. It leads logically to totalitarianism; and, if it is pressed to the bitter end in a free society, it would lead to economic chaos. Democratic Socialism can be nothing else than a system of social and economic organization based on a radical change in the social morality of a community, whereby its members become conscious of their duty towards the whole, and are content to perform it for roughly equal rewards. Such a change can, at best, be only gradual. But unless the hearts and minds of the responsible political leaders, and all responsible members, of the free society—once the working-class has achieved political power—are set towards making this change, the gradual decline and eventual collapse of the free society is inevitable.

That helps to make clear what is meant by saying that if the Conservatives are to offer themselves as a viable alternative to the Labour government, they must come forward as "better Socialists" than they. Their opposition to doctrinaire Socialism must be based on a criticism of its superficiality—its evasion, by specious window-dressing, of the problem of changing the social morality; but they must also show how the social morality can be changed, and make clear their determination to change it. First and foremost, they must be determined to change their own social morality. Conservatism which dreams of "keeping the working-class in order" will deserve what it will get: complete and final rejection by the free society. The only Conservatism that has a positive contribution to make to the advance of the free society is that which insists primarily on "keeping the employers in order," and permeates its traditional supporters with a new consciousness of their duty towards society. It must gradually ingeminate an entire

dissociation of the two ideas contained in the notion that wealth is the just reward for enterprise. In a free society enterprise should be its own reward ; and abnormal wealth an evidence of retarded development.

For a Conservative party that has not radically broken with its own materialism to criticize the workers for not having broken with theirs can only expose it to derision. The avowed materialist philosophy which threatens to capture the working-class, and is the ever-growing menace to the free society, derives most of its strength from the unavowed materialism of the privileged classes, which is so often and so offensively combined with a pretence of Christianity. In Britain, to be sure, this materialism of the bourgeoisie is definitely less unscrupulous and corrupt than it is on the continent of Europe. The plain proof of this is that there was, during the recent war, no real "fifth column" in Britain. Even Sir Oswald Mosley is grossly maligned when he is represented as a "quisling." In Britain the bourgeoisie and the workers showed themselves capable of real unity in defence of their country. That saving grace is precious. In a sense it must be our chief ground for hope that the free society in Britain will not break down. If British patriotism can be raised to a higher dimension, and become as forgetful of self in the greater emergency of peace, as it was in the great emergency of war, we need not despair. This dear, dear land will muddle through to a future as glorious as it may be penurious. The poverty, justly shared, will not matter. The gates of Hell will not prevail against such a society.

But we must not conceal from ourselves that this refining of British patriotism demands real sacrifice from all. The unity of the British people in the hardships of the recent war, impressive though it was, was nevertheless achieved "on the cheap," if the phrase may be allowed. It was achieved by the postponement of equality of economic sacrifice—an unnecessary and mistaken postponement, as I have always believed ; and this postponement was made possible by the boundless but very temporary largess of America. The war-time atmosphere was therefore an atmosphere of economic illusion and deceptive prosperity.

Now, when the simple and primitive emotion of war-time unity has ebbed, the great question is whether a kindred but superior emotion can be evoked in what is a less dramatic but much more profound crisis of the free society.

In order that this shall be possible, a radical change in the ethos of Conservatism is just as necessary as a radical change in the ethos of Labour. Conservatism must explicitly cease to champion "the rights of property" as it has hitherto conceived them. It must concern itself to defend "the rights of property" only so far as, and because, they are necessary to maintain the fundamental freedoms of the free society, as that society has been defined in the course of this book. It must surrender its long obsolete and now pernicious dogma that only the inducement of great profit will elicit the enterprise of men of business, or great emolument attract the talent of professional men. I do not believe it is really true. But, if I am wrong, then let us face the fact that the free society, in its new form, cannot endure. If "the glittering prizes," over which the late Lord Birkenhead smacked his lips, are indeed necessary to call forth the best energies of members of the free society, then it will perish. Herein lies the lurking moral equivocation of war-time unity. It is a unity of a kind unnatural to the free society, which is essentially a society of peace; it is a militarist and hierarchical unity in which "the glittering prizes" of emolument, profit and authority are prodigally rained on not very exceptional men. The free society then becomes, not merely in its organization but largely in its ethos also, an unfree society. The State becomes a sacred cow which everybody is licensed to milk. Civic morality is on the whole debased by the unity of war, as we have experienced it. Such war-time unity is no real index of a nation's capacity for unity under the humdrum, quotidian, but infinitely exacting strains of peace, when duty becomes something that each man must settle with his own awakened conscience, instead of something laid down for him, and with which he can comfortably compromise.

In this war-time distortion of the free society it is fairly easy for Conservatism to deceive itself, and sincerely believe that when it talks of duty it means a universal obligation.

Unfortunately, it happens that most Conservatives are in the relatively pleasant position of giving orders rather than receiving them. Their experience of duty is, in the main, deceptively one-sided. But the experience of duty in the real free society of peace will be quite different. The proportion of jam to the pill—of profit to enterprise, of emolument to talent—will be mightily reduced. It will no longer be reckoned that a modest competence must allow me to send two sons to Eton and a daughter to Roedean. Duty for its own sake will begin to be the order of the day. I believe that the Conservatives have it in them to rise to the new occasion: I know that many of them have adjusted themselves to a situation of economic privation with a quiet domestic heroism which is, almost exactly, the pattern of the new morality required. The ideal of the Christian gentleman will not be one whit less valid in a society of far greater economic equality than the one in which it was shaped. It will, indeed, be far more valid, because it will be an authentic spiritual ideal, purified of comfortable and corrupting circumstance.

The change will not be easy. But nothing is going to be easy if the free society is to endure. Men will have to learn, by bitter experience if nothing else will serve, that the free society has ceased to be the free and easy society. Ease and freedom are no longer compatible. If ease is what its members really want, and freedom is for them merely the condition in which ease is increased, then in an astonishingly short space of time, they will discover that they have lost both ease and freedom. If the discipline of conscience is really beyond the capacity of its members, there is no future for the free society: it must decay. Its political institutions cannot save it, for they themselves will depend upon the renewed vitality of conscience. The best they can do is to grant a brief breathing space during which anarchy is held off by the decaying forces of tradition and habit. They will not hold out for long under the new strains unless there is a genuine revitalization of conscience.

This rebirth of conscience must be revolutionary in its scope and content. The old conceptions of duty simply will not serve. What sufficed to maintain the free society

in its period of unparalleled material prosperity, is now quite insufficient. It is essential that the new conscience of the free society should regard itself as bound to work for an ever-increasing approximation of economic equality among its members. And it must rid itself once for all of the appalling equivocation by which the pursuit of economic equality is regarded by those who have something to lose as "materialistic": that attitude is the most damnable materialism of all. Economic equality is a spiritual end, which is nearly as remote from the aims of the working-class, with their resolute differentiation of wage-rates between industrials, as it is from the aims of the employers. Nevertheless, a continuous and universal striving for it is now the condition of existence for the free society. Only when that is the acknowledged aim of all political parties will the complete permeation of society by conscience become possible.

That the end of economic equality is difficult to achieve is obvious. But those who maintain that gross differentiation of economic reward is necessary if enterprise is to be stimulated and the work of the community is to be done, must realize that, in the new conditions, such a judgment condemns the free society to death. If that be true there is no escape from totalitarianism. If the material motive is the dominant and decisive force in human affairs, then conscience really is an illusion. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot invoke conscience as the sanction of a society which is simply to leave men "free" to be the materialists they really are. Either the free society is the flimsy and ephemeral creation of a conscience which was merely the sanctimonious mask for selfish material interests, and it appeared to flourish just so long as those material interests could safely be prosecuted by the exploitation of the working-class; or it is sustained by a genuine conscience which is compelled to strive for the establishment of a just society: the society in which the interdependence of love and truth is realized. The first of these is the Communist contention. Is it the real truth of the matter? Is Communism hated really because it threatens the material interests of the hitherto privileged classes, and because it

tears the mask of hypocrisy from hypocrites? Or is it hated because it destroys the most precious, the most human, the most God-like element in man—his conscience?

If this is the reason why Communism is hated—and I must dare to hope that it is, because this is the reason why I hate Communism: and I cannot contemplate the idea that I am a better man than the average—then the same conscience that hates Communism must strive sincerely for the economic equality which Communism delusively offers to men. True conscience can never be content till genuine economic equality has been achieved: not because material goods are the most important to conscience, but because they are the least important, and conscience can never be easy until it behaves as though they were.¹⁷ Where material inequality prevails in a society, there conscience is always liable to be compromised and contaminated by the material interests which seek its sanction.

This, then, is the acid test of the free society: whether its members will struggle together towards the goal of economic equality. The goal is distant, because the free society must be maintained in being on the way thither; and the radical change in human motives which is required if a society of economic equality is not to be a short-lived paradise for shirkers must take long to accomplish. At every point on the journey the advance towards equality must be sustained and consolidated by an equal advance in social conscience. The new discipline of conscience must fill the vacuum created by the supersession of the old incentive—of economic compulsion. A constant and exact balancing of the withdrawal of the old morality by the advance of the new is manifestly ideal. There will be, there must be, periods of great crisis—such as that which we have entered now—when the vacuum between them yawns, and threatens to paralyse the economic life of society.

Will conscience be renewed and reborn in time to fill the gap? If the one that now yawns can be filled, we could look forward confidently to a progressive adjustment of the free society to the new demands which will necessarily be made upon it. There is no possibility of its avoiding the impersonal pressures which make towards economic

equality. If a greater measure of economic freedom is to be restored to it, it can only be at the cost of heavier taxation. The old combination of economic freedom and highly differentiated rewards is really a dangerous mirage. If enterprise and initiative can be called forth only by the bait of increasing personal wealth, then the free society must enter a period of continuous economic decline, which will rapidly be translated into political deadlock: from which civic violence will offer the only issue. Fascism and Communism both offer highly differentiated rewards—at a price: the irreparable dissolution of the free society, and the end of a great civilization.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ETERNALITY OF THE FREE SOCIETY

IN considering the future of the free society we are driven back, again and again, to the question : If the free societies fail, will the Logos perish ?

It is an unanswerable question. The existing free societies may fail. The new and wonderful vehicle for the Logos which they are may collapse under the burden of the new responsibility which it must bear. It has been called into existence to bear the responsibility of freedom, and to reveal the identity of truth and love. It may prove to be a burden too great for half-illuminated man, bewildered and betrayed into idolatry by those whose duty is to guide him.

If the free societies do fail, the failure will take the explicit form of a suppression of conscience, politically manifest in the suppression of the fundamental freedoms which culminate in the freedom to form an alternative government to that which holds power. To imagine that this freedom is a particular and unrelated freedom and that it could be suppressed without also suppressing the freedom of thought which is necessary to science is a delusion. Political freedom, as we have shown, enables society to be the vehicle of the conscience on which science depends. They are pseudo-scientists who persuade themselves that the scientific community, which is the judge of the truth of scientific investigation, can maintain itself apart from the free political society. The scientist who admires and envies the prestige and authority of science in Soviet Russia, and who believes that Russia is a "scientific" political society, is a traitor to science itself. Soviet Russia is essentially an obscurantist society, in which, unless there is a revolutionary political change, science also will decay.

But the inevitability of the decay of science in Soviet Russia does not, as it might appear, guarantee the free society against defeat. It does, I think, make it impossible

that Soviet Russia should be victorious in a war against the free society, so long as it remains free. But the real danger that threatens the free society is internal decay. That decay may be hastened by the contagion of the false philosophy of Russia, by which the devil-worship of sheer power is spread among both the intellectuals and the working-class of the free society : but the spread of the contagion would not be possible except it had been preceded by a decay of conscience within the free society. Only where the true philosophy of the free society has perished, or failed to struggle into consciousness, can the false philosophy of the conscienceless social organism of Russia take hold.

This decay of conscience within the free society is fairly well advanced, though perhaps not so far advanced as sometimes appears to my apprehensive mind. But the rigours of the practical test are now beginning for the most politically progressive and the most vulnerable of the free societies, namely, Britain. The economic crisis which became plainly manifest in Britain in January 1947 is a moral and spiritual crisis ; which cannot end save with the collapse or the triumph of the free society. The issue will remain in doubt for years to come. Unless there is a renewal and rebirth of conscience in the free society, it will collapse.

It is important to realize that the free society of Britain is consubstantial with other free societies, and in particular with the free society of America. If it should happen that America comes to the rescue of Britain and so gives her a breathing space to grapple with her own economic and moral crisis, that will in itself be a partial triumph for the free society as a whole. For America can help Britain in this way only by what would be, in fact, a great act of fraternal generosity, however much it might be concealed as an act of expediency. If, however, American help were made contingent and conditional on the free society of Britain acting against its own conscience, by abandoning its effort towards greater social justice, it would mean that America herself had begun to betray the free society. The free society, as a whole, would be betrayed even though a majority of the American Congress insisted upon such a

condition being attached to American aid. If that should happen, then we must hope that the free society of Britain will have the moral strength to refuse all help from America to which a condition so repugnant to conscience is attached. By so acting it might awaken the moral conscience of America, which she would violate by offering help to which political conditions were attached. But such an offer would put the moral conscience of Britain herself to a stern test, for there are many in Britain to whom her present effort towards social justice is anathema, and some of them—though certainly not all—might eagerly seize the opportunity of defeating it, by demanding that the American conditions should be accepted. They would be traitors to the free society of Britain. But they might have much popular support. For the choice before the man in the street would be between cigarettes and conscience. The vogue of the cigarette currency in Europe suggests that cigarettes might win.

These speculations are merely to indicate one of the practical forms which the test in Britain may take. If by an act of fraternal generosity America were to offer unconditional help to socialistic Britain, the free society in both countries would be strengthened: in America by so striking an assertion of the essential morality of the free society which seeks the freedom of others, according to the nature of love, which seeks "to let the loved one be"; and in Britain, first by the moral response to such generosity, and second by the respite gained in the struggle to overcome the economic crisis. That such a breathing space is due to Britain cannot be gainsaid, by those who think according to the morality of the free society; because the burden which Britain bore in the armed struggle for the free society was disproportionately great. And, although it is still a commonplace that gratitude has no place in the relations between nations, that commonplace has now to be superseded by the new truth that between the free societies the relation must be the relation of love. The word sounds odd in such a context. But we must insist upon it. The manifestation of love may be crude, it may be shame-faced, it may seek to disguise its own revolutionary newness from

itself. That does not matter. But unless the new relation of love begins to be operative between the free societies, they will weaken and eventually betray one another. For the free society is one. The time is at hand when its member-societies must realize their consubstantiality and brotherhood, in face of the consubstantiality without brotherhood of the new Communist social organism. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, what thank have ye?"

But, in the main, Britain must overcome her economic and moral crisis by her own efforts. To overcome it, without diminishing the fundamental freedoms, will demand a moral effort without parallel in her history. If moral cynicism has bitten deep into her soul, she will fail; but if, as I still believe, it is moral bewilderment rather than moral cynicism that affects her, and this bewilderment is due largely to the lack of clear moral leadership, based on clear moral understanding, she will succeed, though after much tribulation. What is required is a gradually growing reaffirmation of the moral will to remain a free society, expressed in an increasing assumption of moral responsibility throughout its membership. Member after member of the free society has to be converted to the knowledge that freedom can be nothing else than freedom to obey the moral law by willing the conditions of freedom: and that all other freedom is illusory and self-destructive.

However, no matter how hopeful and personally determined one may be, it is necessary to admit to oneself that the free society, in its existing forms, may fail. In that disastrous event, it would be consoling to be able to believe that there is a necessity in the nature of man which would compel him to struggle, again and yet again, towards the establishment of the free society, out of the age of darkness which would certainly envelop him if the existing forms of the free society were to perish. In a sense, indeed, it is a necessity of human thought that we should believe this: for it is almost impossible even for a mind which is sceptical of the permanence of morality to conceive a condition of humanity in which science was no longer possible. Yet it seems plain that, if the free society does perish, science must

also perish, because the pursuit of scientific truth depends upon a consensus and community of consciences which is attainable only within the free society.¹⁸ It is perhaps tempting to think that science has now a momentum of its own which would enable it to survive the decay of the free political society. But that, I believe, is tantamount to saying that the scientific community, which is still to some extent international, would be working continually to re-establish the free political society: and that, even in Soviet Russia, the men of science would be working for the supersession of the present political régime, in order to establish the political conditions necessary to their own functioning.

This picture seems to me unwarrantably optimistic. It is possible that men of science in the new Communist social organism may even now realize the menace to the integrity and progress of science which derives from the political system to which they are condemned. But they are impotent to change it. The political, as we have argued previously, really is primary; and the rulers of Soviet Russia have, at least, a firmer grasp of that axiom than many of their admirers in the free societies. But the fact that the Soviet rulers have committed themselves to a continuation of history which is self-contradictory—namely, by erecting a scientific theory of history into an infallible religion which must empty history of meaning and destroy science itself—does not prevent them from setting in motion a process of massive human degradation which may well be in practice irreversible. The self-contradiction of their proceeding is a self-contradiction only within the framework of the Logos civilization. Destroy, or suffer to decay, the political vehicles of that civilization, the media which nourish its canons of truth and whence its judgments proceed, and self-contradiction ceases entirely to be a guarantee of failure. If the human race massively relapses into an instinctual and insect existence, it will not have the wherewithal even to reason about or regret its condition.

I am convinced that the contemporary confidence in the autonomy and invulnerability of science has no solid foundation. Science is as vulnerable as the free society, and

is ultimately dependent on it. The danger comes from the fact that so many men of science today are too narrow-minded to see this. The matrix of science has been the politically free society, first in Greece, then in the final form of the Christian society. It was only when the Christian impulse, with the aid of the Roman tradition of law, had created for the intellectual freedom of Greek speculation a body politic which assured it of an abiding home, that science, in the modern sense, became possible. For science lives by a continuous tradition of scientific integrity, created and continually renewed by conscience. The scientific community is the child of the free society. That is historically true ; and it is eternally true. That we have already reached a condition in which many members of the scientific community in the free society are engaged in undermining the free society in the name of science is perhaps the most alarming evidence of our peril.

Though it is eternally true that the scientific community is the child of the free society, both may perish together. It is an illusion that Science has "come to stay," as it is an illusion that the Machine has "come to stay," if by those slogans men mean, as they almost always do, that Science and the Machine will stay of themselves, no matter whether men defend or forsake the free society. Ultimately, their staying depends upon an effort of the moral will, exerted to perpetuate the only form of society which has created them or can maintain them in being. If that moral will fails, and the free society perishes, a process of decline—of an inward decay of science, and a progressive decline of technology—will follow. Only one civilization has created science, or been capable of creating it: the Græco-Christian civilization, in its long struggle towards an apprehension and a political embodiment of the identity of truth and love.

For that civilization, and that civilization alone, the identity of truth and love is God. When it has denied or struggled against the temporary formulations of that divinity, it has been moved by the impulse and desire to penetrate nearer to the reality of God, and to discover Him more fully : until at the very moment when it is discovering that without a society of love no truth is possible, and

without a society of truth-seekers no love is possible, it has lost belief in God. I do not believe that this, in itself, is disastrous. It seems to me rather a necessary stage in the re-discovery of God: that is, in finding an expression more adequate than that of empirical Christianity for the identity of love and truth. For the empirical Church asserts the identity of love and truth in a God who is almost totally other than Man; and although there is, theoretically, room in its theology for an equal emphasis on the Divine in Man, the fact is that it has avoided this emphasis. On the whole, it is lamentably true that the empirical Christian Church has opposed and retarded Man's effort to approximate the human society to the Christian ideal. Only some of the Protestant sects, and those not the most powerful, have embraced the idea that Christianity must work towards a society of political equality. Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, Lutheranism and Calvinism have all emphatically denied it. The tradition and record of the Christian Church is, on the whole, opposed to the free society. And although, as we have insisted, the free society has been largely the creation of the smaller Protestant sects, it was created by their rebellion against the authoritarianism of Roman Catholicism, of Anglicanism and of Calvinism and Lutheranism: that is, by a rebellion against the most powerful forms of Protestantism equally with Roman Catholicism.

The free society is at once the final term of this humanist repudiation of, let us say, five-sixths of the empirical Christian Church, and it is the first term of a new synthesis. For the free society opens its arms to all those forms of the Christian Church which tried to strangle it at birth. In other words, the free society has forgiven them, where some of them have not, even yet, forgiven the free society, even though they now owe their very existence to it. It is, as we have said before, the free society which has saved authoritarian Catholicism in Spain and, in a humaner form, in Eire. Thus, the free society has been, in fact, very much more Christian than the greater part of the empirical Christian Church, and is much more worthy to be called the Christian Church than the majority of the Christian

Churches now existing. It may not know the doctrine, but it has done the works. Is it not asking too much to ask it to believe that the Christian Churches which refused to do the works really know the doctrine?

That is the simple and sufficient explanation why, at the very moment that the Logos civilization has, in its chosen instrument, the free society, begun to discover that without a society of love no truth is possible, and without a society of truth-seekers no love is possible, it has lost belief in God; and why that loss of belief in God is not disastrous, but natural: indeed, more than natural. It is a condition necessary to a fuller and truer apprehension of God than the Christian Church has manifested. Whether the free society will reach that fuller and truer apprehension of God, I cannot prophesy; but I can and do prophesy that, unless it does, it will perish. And I can and do prophesy that unless the attitude of the Christian Church towards the free society changes from that of unwarrantable presumption to one of repentant humility, of devoted and whole-hearted service, the empirical Christian Church will perish even more certainly than the free society will.

The empirical Christian Church has no mission and no right to teach Christianity to the free society. It might have had; but it sold its birthright for a mess of pottage ages ago. Its mission is now to learn, first, what Christianity is from the free society and its needs, and then, and then only, to interpret the free society to itself. The implicit Christianity of the free society should become the explicit Christianity of the Church. It should realize once for all that the Church as such has no superior wisdom, no higher revelation, to impart to the free society as such. That does not mean that there is not room, and need, within the free society for all the various formulations of God that the Christian churches have to offer; but the free society itself is the Church which comprehends them all. That is the truth which every section of the Christian Church needs to mark and inwardly digest. Every section of it needs to apply itself to discerning and making explicit the implicit Christianity of the free society and so to arrive at a new and deeper apprehension of the eternal truths,

which it utters indeed, but utters for the most part as empty words—incantations dimly remembered from a distant past. The living Word and the living God will come to the Church again only when it seeks them through service to the free society.

But—the question returns—if the free society fails, will it not then be the mission of the Church to keep the spark alive? I have said, already, that if the free society does fail, the Church, like its Master, will have nowhere to lay its head. If the free society should perish, the empirical Church will perish too. Those who, comforting themselves with the thought that the Christian Church is eternal, profess a sort of transcendental indifference to the fate of the free society, are the victims of an egotistic illusion. Of that I am certain. But I can conceive that if the Christian Church were to identify itself with the concrete catholic church which is the free society, and the free society were then to fail, the remnant of the faithful that would remain might somehow carry on the torch. The believers in the identity of love and truth, who had not failed in their duty to the free society, might somehow gather together even in the catacombs of totalitarianism. That, with an effort of mind, I can conceive, and with an effort of faith, believe. What, with the utmost effort of mind, I cannot conceive, nor, with the utmost effort of faith, believe, is that those Christians, who because of a lip-belief in the eternity of the Christian Church, condescend towards the free society, and profess to believe that the free society, like all other forms of political society, is essentially ephemeral, whereas the Church is essentially eternal, will be members of the Church whose claim to eternity may perhaps be validated in the totalitarian catacombs. They, or their spiritual descendants, will not be found among the persecuted remnant, if remnant there has to be; they will be found as pillars of the eternal Church of Anti-Christ, which will assuredly be preserved, with a comfortable subvention from the totalitarian state, to perform the ritual of Christianity with the same insect-like automatism as the rest of the operations of the conscienceless Jerusalem. They will be the protopopes of the new Byzantinism.

The free society is not one among many forms of political society. It is an entirely new form of political society; and it is the sole *living* form of the Christian Church. If the Christian Church is really alive anywhere outside the free societies, it is because, and in so far as, it is itself a free society in miniature. The free society is ephemeral only in the sense that it may die, and one of the reasons why it may die is because the Christian Church itself may be dead—too dead to identify itself with anything so vulgar and transitory as a political society.

When Christians persuade themselves that such an identification of the Christian Church with the free society is a derogation of its claim to be eternal, their thinking is confused. In so far as the word "eternal" has meaning for any mind which has, in pursuit of truth, momentarily placed itself outside the frame of reference of the Logos civilization, it can be maintained that the Christian Church is eternal, indeed. But it is eternal because, and in so far as, it bears witness to the eternal identity of love and truth: because, and in so far as, it worships this identity as historically manifest in the new Man, Jesus Christ; because, and in so far as, it worships Jesus Christ as an incarnation of the identity of love and truth, and *therefore* as the revelation and manifestation of God. So also is the free society eternal, because and in so far as it is dedicated to the manifestation of the same identity of love and truth. The principle, if we may so call it, of each is eternal. It is the same principle in each which is eternal; by loyalty or treachery to which each lives or dies. For this principle there is no other word than God.

The Christian Church is old; the free society is new. But that does not make the Christian Church one whit more eternal than the free society. The continuity of its historical existence covers periods of appalling apostasy from its witness to God as the identity of love and truth. If the free society plunges into an apostasy comparable to that of the Christian Church at some periods of its history, the free society will perish with a completeness which the Christian Church escaped. But this time, the Christian Church itself will be totally involved in the apostasy of the free society.

Those who survive to proclaim the identity of love and truth will be all that remains of the eternal Christian Church, and all that remains of the eternal free society.

The free society is "eternal," precisely as the Christian Church is "eternal." They are neither more, nor less, "eternal" than one another. Both proclaim that a belief in the identity of love and truth is necessary to human existence. That is true, within the frame of reference in which truth has meaning. But if a frame of reference is established in which truth has no meaning, in that frame of reference it would be utterly meaningless to speak of the identity of love and truth, still less of their being necessary to human existence. Human existence would itself have ceased. Another mode of existence would have superseded it.

To say that the Christian Church and the free society are "eternal" is simply to say that the supersession of *human* existence is inconceivable. And I think it is, strictly speaking, *inconceivable*. We cannot conceive the thoughts or the way of life of the Australian blackfellow. His mode of existence is inconceivable, but it is real. In the same way, the supersession of the mode of human existence which I have called the Logos-civilization, though strictly inconceivable, is not impossible. If it were to happen, the God of Christianity would simply cease to be, or—if a more decorous way of putting it is preferred—He would cease to be apprehended, known and loved. If the theologian can derive comfort from his assertion that God would nevertheless exist, to be apprehended again when human existence was restored, he is welcome to it. But all that he is doing is to declare his faith that the specifically human mode of existence cannot be superseded. As I have said, I do not cavil at that faith, which in some sense I share, provided it inspires those who hold it to defend and extend the form of society on which the continued existence of the Logos-civilization depends. But if the faith that God and the Church are eternal inspires indifference to, or detachment from, the universal effort that is required to maintain the free society, then I hold it to be a pernicious and vainglorious illusion.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

THERE is one necessary way for a Christian who lives within the free society to worship God : that is, to help to inspire the free society to maintain itself and go forward, by helping to make it conscious of its high calling. That is the contemporary way of obedience today to the divine command : " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness ; and the rest shall be added unto you." It is perhaps tedious repetition to explain again that, by following this path, not one atom of the Christian verity will be lost ; or rather that all that would be lost by following this path is what ought to be lost, because it is that which obscures and obstructs the apprehension of the living God. The one foundation and bulwark of the free society is Man in his apprehension of the living God. He apprehends the living God in his obedience to the twofold conscience : the conscience of love—in his resolve to maintain his brother's freedom to seek the truth—and the conscience of truth—in his own determination to seek the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. These two impulses of conscience are the very life of the free society. While they are operative, the free society lives : when they cease to be operative, it dies.

Thus it is both false, and true, to say (as is frequently said) that the free society cannot survive except as a Christian society. It is false, when it is intended to mean that only by a return to the Christianity of the empirical Church, which the free society has largely abandoned, can the foundation of the free society be strengthened and secured. It is true, when it is intended to mean that the foundation of the free society can be strengthened and secured only by its members becoming far more conscious than they are of the obligations which their membership of a religious, and specifically a Christian society imposes upon them. But

to suggest that the members of the empirical Christian churches are, in any degree, more conscious of their obligations to the free society than others is moonshine. Some Christians are much more conscious of those obligations than the average non-Christian member of the free society, some much less. But I have always echoing in my mind the earnest words of one of the most sincere and enlightened Christians in England today—distinguished by the depth of his conviction that it is the first duty of a Christian, because he is a Christian, to understand and fulfil his obligations to the free society. “One thing I have learned,” he said. “If we expect the institutional Church as such to give a lead in this matter, we shall be disappointed. *We must wash it out.*”

I fear that that may be true. Yet I can hardly reconcile myself to it: so desperate is the need of a new religious understanding of the free society, a new religious and Christian faith in it. *It does seem to me, even now, possible that the Christian churches in England, whose record in respect to the political society, though by no means clean, is yet much cleaner than that of the Christian churches on the continent, may do their Christian duty in interpreting the free society to itself, with the necessary humility. One thing, I know, stands in the way, which I have not yet directly discussed. I must discuss it now.*

The empirical Christian church, in all its branches, teaches the bodily resurrection from the dead. With what conviction it teaches it, it is not for me to say. I have never yet heard it taught with the simple and passionate conviction with which I should teach and preach it, if I believed it. But that may be pure accident. The point is that the empirical Christian church professes that the bodily resurrection from the dead is the cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith; and that doctrine, if professed and believed with simple candour, does appear to make the fortunes of any political society—including the free society—of singularly little account. I myself should say that, even if I did believe in the resurrection from the dead in the simple bodily sense in which the empirical Christian church professes it, it would make very little difference to my attitude towards

the free society. I should, I think, believe in it just as passionately as I do, and I should still see in it the actual catholic church; because I should be convinced that my bodily resurrection was merely the prelude to the Divine judgment upon me. I should believe that God's most searching question to me would be: "What did you do to defend my society?" I should believe that, were I to reply: "Lord, I defended Thy Church," He would say: "What is my Church?" And if I were to reply to that question: "Lord, the company of them that believe in the resurrection of the dead," He would say: "Depart from me! My society was, and is, the free society. In that you defended it not, you defended not Me."

But, I suppose, it is because I do not believe in the Judgment *after* a bodily resurrection, that I am free to imagine the Judgment in this simple and familiar way. I believe in the Judgment—here, now, and all the time. I believe that, whether I like it or not, I live continually in the presence and under the judgment of God; and, in consequence, I am only too familiar with the questions He would be likely to ask me, if my encounter with Him were delayed until the end of time. A question which He never puts to me now is: "Do you, or do you not, believe in the resurrection of the body?" I suppose, because He no longer regards it as very important.

But those who believe that God attaches enormous importance to this question, and that, unless we answer the question here and now in the affirmative, we are not members of his Church, believe it (I suppose) because they believe that the life hereafter, being everlasting, is of enormously greater importance than this one, which, for any individual, is brief. What happens to a man, in the second stage of his life, which will last a million million years and a lot more, is obviously more important than what happens to him in the first stage, which lasts only three score years and ten. The free society, in that case, is hardly worth bothering about: and it really cannot matter very much whether one is swallowed up in the totalitarian prison-house. Unless, of course, being a member of the free society definitely improves one's chances of everlasting

happiness instead of the other thing. It is hard to see why it should. It is not as though in the totalitarian society men were forbidden to profess their belief in an everlasting life after death. Quite the contrary. For the particular kind of Christianity which regards this belief as the all-important thing the totalitarian society now has plenty of room, and it will have more. As long as you do what the totalitarian society tells you in this life, you can believe what you like about the next.

But if you believe that your chance of everlasting happiness in the next life depends entirely on what you actually *do* in this one, the case is altered. Then the seventy years are just as important as the million million : and even more important, for they decide the quality of the million million. Then the chief question is : What ought you to do in this life ? And who is going to tell you that ?

There are three answers to the question in the world today. Either the State will tell you, or the Church will tell you, or your conscience will tell you. In the totalitarian society the State will tell you, exactly and explicitly ; in the free society, your conscience will tell you, exactly and explicitly, if you consult it with singleness of heart and mind ; in any form of society the Church will tell you : Obey the laws, go to Church, and believe in the Resurrection of the Body. The answer is totally irrelevant to the human predicament. In the free society, it does no positive harm, but no positive good. In the totalitarian society it is positively pernicious. In the betwixt and between societies, which need positive guidance, it gives none.

The reason for this irrelevance of the Church, massively considered, is that it has to hang on to its profession that the everlasting life after death is what really matters, and that, in order to get it, the one absolutely necessary duty in this life is to belong to the Church, which is an association of those who believe this. The vital link between what man actually does with his responsible freedom in this life and his chance of salvation in the next the Church has never dared to forge.

What the Church has not dared to do, the free society has done ; or rather, in the effort to forge that link, men

have created the free society : a society that can live only by its nearness to God. It is near Him now ; but it will have to be nearer to Him still.

Perhaps, therefore, the renewal of conscience within the free society, by propagating an understanding of its nature, can be most hopefully conceived as the task of a lay Christianity, in so far as it can be regarded as a specifically Christian task—one to which “those who profess and call themselves Christians” are pre-eminently called. If, as I am convinced, the free society is *the* Christian society, it differs from the traditional forms of Christian society—namely, the Churches—in that it is essentially a lay society. It has its “clerks”—conscientious and criminous—but the majority of them are not professing Christians at all, and of those who are, few are in orders. But it is other than a lay Christian society ; it is unconsciously Christian society. That is at once its strength, and its danger. But, in so far as it becomes conscious of its own Christian essence, it must evolve a new conception of Christianity—one that does not indeed break with the old one, but is nevertheless revolutionary : in a real sense a death and re-birth of the Christian faith. In my experience, many lay Christians are prepared for this. Whatever they may believe concerning the Resurrection of the Body, they do not in practice regard this article of faith as diminishing in any degree their passionate concern for the continued existence of the free society. They feel that their traditional Christian worship simply strengthens them in their effort to serve the free society with entire and unconditional devotion. If such a movement of the Christian laity could grow, it might be of the utmost importance in the testing time to come. It may not be able fully to accept the doctrine set forth in this book, but it will do the works it calls for.

There are two truths which I cannot evade. The free society depends upon God ; and God depends on the free society. They are equipollent : they are complementary. To insist on the first, and ignore the second is to obstruct the new apprehension of God that is necessary if the false God of totalitarianism is to be rejected. To insist on the second and ignore the first is to diminish the transcendent

majesty of the power to which the twofold conscience bears witness. That is to say that God both transcends and is immanent in the free society. The real difference between this and the traditional Christian faith as to the relation between God and Man—and there is a vital difference—lies in the new acknowledgement that Man is Man only within a political society, and that the old atomistic individual of Christian thought does not exist.

If it be said that this atomistic individual, standing in direct relation to God, is the presupposition of Protestant rather than Catholic thought (which is true enough), it must be replied that the tradition of Catholic thought is even more remote from the reality of contemporary man. Catholic thought does indeed assume a social man, but the society to which it assumes him to belong vanished centuries ago. It was the peasant and hierarchical society of the age when man's livelihood depended, almost entirely, on the agriculture of the segregated and economically autonomous village-community. In that age the Church represented the idea of universal human unity, which was remote from the actual experience of man.

That world is past : relics of it only linger on, to awaken the nostalgia of those who cannot believe that God fulfils himself in many ways. In it, appropriately enough, an authoritarian Church mediated to man the idea of human unity in child-like obedience to the one God, arched like a rainbow over the static anarchy of an unintegrated world. As that world stirred itself towards integration, the pieces of the pattern began to move. Man began to edge himself from his fixed status in the social hierarchy, and in the process of liberating himself from his matrix became an individual. He had to have the authority of God for his revolutionary effort, and he found it, by asserting his own direct relation to God. He began to dispense with the mediation of the authoritarian Church ; and the crude foundations of the new community were established. It was, at once, a new religious community of conscience, and a new economic community of individual enterprise ; and its multifarious activity created, largely in ignorance of what it was doing, the new and incredibly integrated

society in which men live today: the society which Karl Marx brought to a new and unwilling consciousness of its own nature, when he proclaimed that "Man is the complex of social relations." He was the first clearly to grasp the strange paradox whereby man, acting in the pride and vigour of his newly-acquired individuality, had created a society wherein individuality was, to a very considerable degree, an illusion.

But what Marx did not see was that, in simultaneously establishing the free political society, individual and individualistic man had created a completely novel instrument for the expression of conscience: instead of an individual guided by conscience, a society guided by conscience, operative through new political institutions. This society was precarious and vulnerable, as a new creation must be. Its security depended upon more and more of its members becoming conscious of its nature, of the obligations they owed to it, of the restraint which they must put on their egotism, of the self-limitation which they must impose upon their thinking, their conduct and their policies. Its security depended upon the birth of a new sense of the social whole, a new loyalty to the community. Since this new birth could only come to pass in individuals, individuality was not an illusion; it was still the indispensable reality. But the individuality assumed and required was a new individuality: a condition in which the individual recognised and acknowledged that the old individuality and individualism was essentially anarchic and self-destructive, and that true individuality lay only in voluntary self-submission to the moral law of the new society. There must be a new conception and a new experience of freedom reached through understanding the newness of the free society. There must be a new conception and experience of conscience reached through understanding that the free society itself was the new instrument of conscience, in the new epoch of social integration.

Thus, the free society itself is become the primary vehicle for mediating God to Man, because it requires of him, as the condition of its own continued existence, a passing from a false to a true freedom, by means of con-

science and consciousness. Only in the free society can the individual person survive, and the free society can survive only if the individual is transformed. It requires a new conversion of the individual. But we must not conceive of this conversion as the dramatic, and sometimes highly emotional process known as religious conversion, because it is primarily a social process. But it is not an atom less real, or less religious for that. In the politician, it will be manifest as a new concern for the country instead of the party, a new determination not to abuse power arising from an understanding of the vulnerability of the free society, a new moral courage and integrity; in the ordinary member of society a new determination to obey the new laws which will be restrained from extravagance by the new conscience of the politicians; in the intellectual and the educator a new sense of obligation to restrain his thought from lawlessness, and to recognise that any speculation which disregards or diminishes the vital reality of conscience as the sole foundation of political freedom and scientific inquiry is, necessarily, false, and to propagate it, treachery; in every free association of workers, whether professional or manual, a new resolve to require a high standard of work from its members; in every religious organisation, a new realisation of what is involved, here and now, in its hitherto perfunctory teaching of human brotherhood, and a new self-dedication as a centre of illumination whence the new conscience may be radiated and diffused throughout the free society.

The demand of the free society is the demand of God; it is equally the demand of Man. In the free society they speak together as never before: not in occasional communication, but in every thread of the texture of the every day life of the new responsible individuals, without whom the free society must perish. The question, the momentous and unanswerable question, is whether this new conversation between God and Man, between Man and God, will begin in time. The lassitude, the ignorance, the cynicism, the downright treachery are great; the inspiring sense of the new great and perilous adventure into which the free society has stumbled, unawares, is still small.

Those who should, by vocation, be its leaders appear to wander vaguely like men in a dream, improvising without vision, exhorting without understanding. With a few rare exceptions they are *little men*, at heart afraid—afraid of real responsibility, afraid of unpopularity, and above all afraid of looking bravely into the nature of the crisis into which the free society is now plunged.

That crisis is total: economic, political, moral, and, above all, religious. In Britain, which led the way into the free society and into the vast industrial revolution which has changed, irrevocably, the whole fabric of Man's existence, the Logos-civilization now has to take the first great shock of a challenge such as it has never endured before. If the free society of Britain fails in the onset, then (I believe) the lamps of the great civilization will begin to go out all over the world. I do not believe that America, for all her power, her wealth, her enterprise, can stand up to the shock if Britain fails. For the demand for social justice which Britain is struggling to satisfy is an ineluctable demand. The free society which is not a just society cannot endure. America has not yet seriously begun to prepare for that necessity, and is still the paradise of the freedom that is irresponsible. By such a society the Logos-civilization cannot be defended. Indeed, in her short-sighted desire to universalize her own economy of irresponsible freedom, by imposing onerous conditions upon her aid to Britain,¹⁰ America has contributed to the extremity of Britain's crisis; and she may learn too late that it is implicit in the morality of the free society that it should stand by its brother not only in the peril of war, but in the greater jeopardy of peace.

These things may be learned by America; but they will not be learned unless Britain makes an unprecedented effort to save herself by her own exertions. Her failure would teach America the fatal lesson that working-class government is disastrous to a free society. That may prove to be true; but if it is true, then the Logos-civilization is doomed. For the free society cannot avoid government by the working-class, except by ceasing to be free. And

if the government of the working-class plunges the free society in ruin, it would only mean that the identity of love and truth towards which the Logos-civilization has struggled is a mirage, because Man is incapable of realizing it in act. That identity is the condition of freedom, indeed, but Man could only use his freedom to repudiate the condition of freedom. The converse of Rousseau's great proposition would be proved. Man would have struggled to freedom, only to sink into slavery. He would have won for himself the freedom to know God, only to abandon Him. The great adventure would be over. The darkness would begin to descend, as the lights of conscience grew dim.

Men will dream of refuge in a new Christian authoritarianism; but it is a vain dream. It is a resurrection of the pre-individual past: a skeleton, without flesh and blood. The dry bones will not live. The authority of Christianity in the future will rest on man's conscience, or it will have no foundation at all. The benevolent and infallible rulers of the new Christian despotism would be atheists. True, a body of Christian men might be called in by the free society to save it from slavery. But that is a totally different thing. They would be the conscience of the free society, bound in conscience to surrender power at its summons. Christian dictatorship is a figment of the lawless imagination, however assiduous at Mass General Franco may be.

For the Church cannot go back on the free society, without becoming anti-Christ. It can only go forward with it. It will go forward with it, more gloriously, if it has the conviction that, if the free society lives, it also will live, and if the free society dies, it also will die. If the free society lives, partly because the Christian Church has struggled to make it live, the Christian Church will have a meaning for the world which it has lost, and will never regain except by this act of humble self-dedication to the living God. If the free society dies, the Christian Church will survive only in the society of those who will struggle to re-create it. Whether such a society would or could exist, in the darkness which will cover the earth if -

the free society perishes, is a question of faith. But it will be a real faith only in those who have had the courage to stare into the darkness of the eclipse.

That is not easily done. I have asked myself again and again while writing this book whether the dark phantom that I have been conjuring up may not be the fantasy of an imagination made sick by the appalling convulsion of two world wars. That self-questioning is obstinate, because it is only with an effort that I can drive my mind into the strange region whence I can momentarily contemplate the end of this complex and wonderful civilization of which I am the child. In that strange region, my mind cannot think, my soul cannot breathe. It is darkness and oblivion.

Therefore, I am tempted to say to myself that this terrible philosophy of Communism can be only a momentary aberration of mankind. It *must* humanize itself. No power on earth can drive a nation of two hundred million souls into the abyss, or suck the vital spirit out of the free society and the Logos civilization. It is my way of declaring essentially the same faith which inspires others to say that the Christian Church is eternal.

But, alas, I cannot hold it. Or rather I can hold it only by an intense effort of the moral will, as a truth whose truth depends on the determination of Man to make it true. As a passive faith, it is meaningless; worse than meaningless, an act of treachery: only as an active faith, which guides and determines the actual conduct of men, can it bring me consolation. Only by contending against the creeping darkness, can the darkness be overcome.

NOTES

¹ Russia refused to participate in the international control of the Greek elections in 1946.

² This was written in December 1946. Since then, in a lamentable speech to the Security Council of the United Nations on March 8, 1947, Mr. Gromyko withdrew Mr. Molotov's apparent concession.

³ It is also no accident that the moving spirit of the T.V.A., Mr. David Lilienthal, was also the originator of the Baruch proposals.

⁴ Excusing the forcible deportation of the technical workers in German armament factories to Russia to the heads of the German political parties, Marshal Sokolovsky said: "We hated to do it, but we did it for the sake of the peace of the world. There can only be peace if Russia is fully armed."—*Economist*, Dec. 5, 1946.

⁵ Cf. "Paranoid Thinking in Politics," by the late Dr. J. T. MacCurdy, *Fortnightly Review*, June 1946.

⁶ This was written in December 1946; on March 8, 1947, Mr. Gromyko, on behalf of Russia, bluntly rejected the whole of the Baruch proposals. The consequence was an immediate hardening of the American attitude towards Russia.

⁷ Though very improbable, for reasons given later.

⁸ In Rousseau's phraseology, the *volonté générale* would have completely replaced the *volonté de tous*.

⁹ Perhaps the connection between them was most explicit when Oliver Cromwell, as a new Member of Parliament, declared that if the Petition of Right were not passed he would sell his lands and go to New England.

¹⁰ I believe it was R. R. Marett, the Oxford anthropologist, who said this.

¹¹ This might be read as implying that the more legislation in a free society, the more freedom. But (1) the abrogation of excessive and misconceived legislation is an essential part of the laws of the free society; and (2), as will be shown hereafter, it will be found necessary that free associations in the free society should voluntarily anticipate legislation and render it unnecessary.

¹² Anarchy, which is the logical consequence of the "free" conscience, should not be confused with philosophical anarchism, which is based on the will to voluntary co-operation. This will is singularly lacking in most possessors of a "free" conscience. It is doubly unfortunate that it is, as often as not, these egotistical neurotics who profess and discredit philosophical anarchism.

¹³ As in the case of the late James Maxton. James Maxton's imaginative understanding was such that the institution of Parliament changed him to a great "House of Commons man," without weakening in any degree his selfless devotion to the cause of social justice. On the contrary, he became the conscience of the House of Commons; and the House of Commons was glad of it, because he was not a self-righteous man. James Maxton's tolerance was the same virtue

which caused him to identify himself with the oppressed. The House of Commons has the true ethos of the free society, in that it can tolerate anything except intolerance: or the doctrinaire, which is the same thing.

¹⁴ It needs no demonstration that a combination of employers formed to keep the inefficient producer solvent by fixing prices which enable him to produce at a profit fleeces the community by securing inordinate profits to the efficient producer.

¹⁵ "The Crisis of Western Culture," by Professor F. A. Hodges, *The Adelphi*, April-June, 1947.

¹⁶ It is seldom remembered, or easily forgotten, how recent is the establishment of the fully free political society in Britain. The great mid-Victorian Radicals, Cobden and Bright, were by no means democrats in the modern sense. "Even as late as the 'seventies the idea of returning working men to Parliament was supposed to be a fad of John Stuart Mill's, who advocated it (in strict moderation) as the means of giving extreme opinion just that amount of representation which he held to be necessary, if moderate opinion was not to be too moderate. The Radicals were for an enlarged (though by no means universal) franchise, but the majority of both Whigs and Tories were only with great reluctance induced to accept the moderate instalment of reform conceded in the Household Franchise Act of 1867. We shall not understand the history of that or the preceding year unless we grasp the fact that many of the Liberals of this period, let alone the Whigs, formally disowned the imputation of being democrats." (*The Public Life*: J. A. Spender.)

In 1868—the year following the Household Franchise Act of 1867,—the registered number of electors in the following seven boroughs, returning one member each, was: Arundel, 185; Thetford, 219; Lyme Regis, 243; Dartmouth, 254; Ashburton, 279; Honiton, 280; Wells, 315.

¹⁷ "Though the ideal of an equal distribution of material wealth may continue to elude us, it is necessary, nevertheless, to make haste towards it, not because such wealth is the most important of man's treasures, but to prove that it is not. *Sint temporalia in usu, aterna in desiderio.*" (R. H. Tawney: *Equality*, p. 291.)

¹⁸ This subject is brilliantly discussed by Professor Michael Polanyi in "Science, Faith, and Society," the Riddell Lectures at Durham University (Oxford Press).

¹⁹ I refer to the Bretton Woods agreement.

